

# JACK'S WAR

A Pilot's World War II Journal

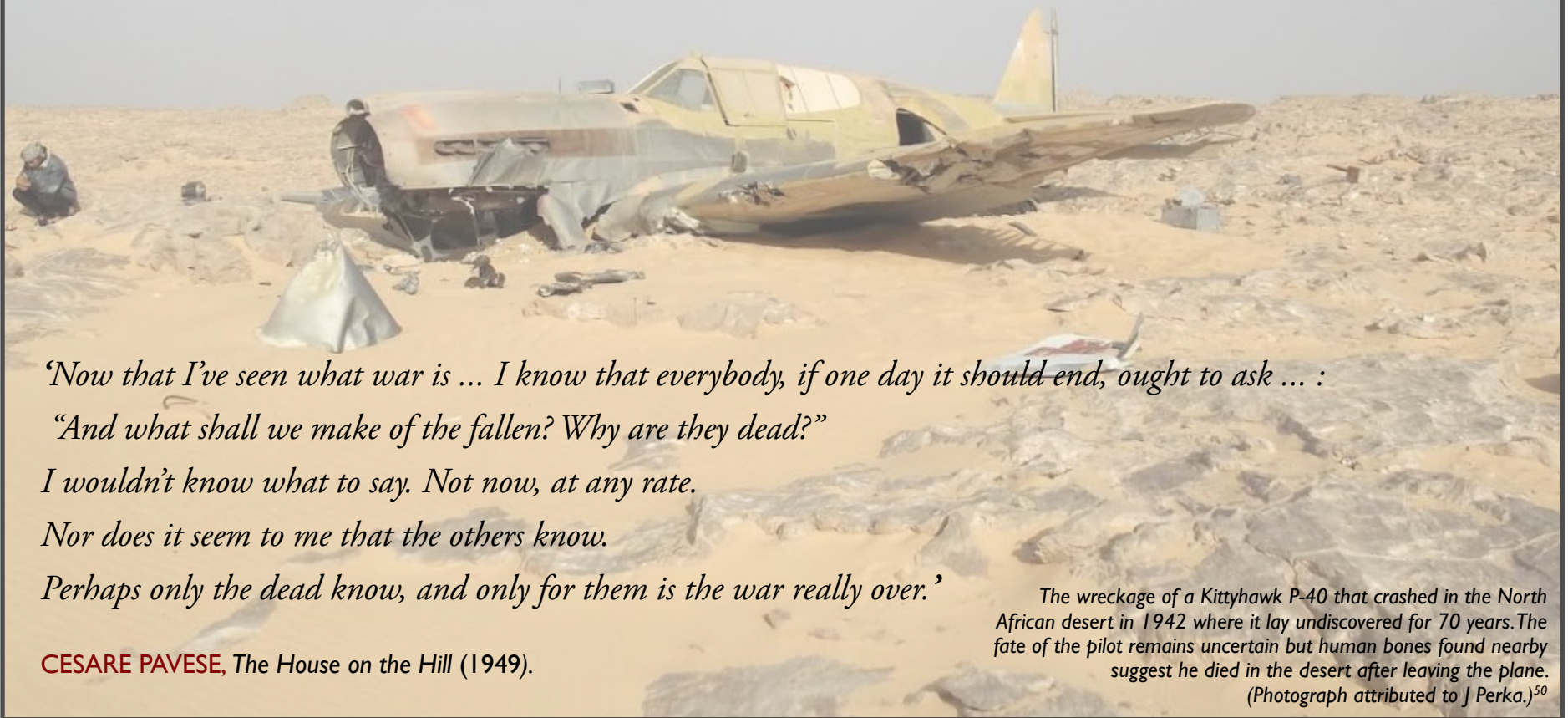
March 1942 - 1945

Written by Jack Lusby,  
Australian cartoonist, short story writer,  
RAAF pilot, and raconteur.

Journals transcribed with introduction and commentary by Maria (Lusby) Simms.  
Military history consultant, James Oglethorpe.  
© Maria Simms 2012. All rights reserved.

*‘Courage is almost a contradiction in terms.  
It means a strong desire to live taking the form of readiness to die.’*

**GILBERT K CHESTERTON**, *Orthodoxy* (1909).



*‘Now that I’ve seen what war is ... I know that everybody, if one day it should end, ought to ask ... :  
“And what shall we make of the fallen? Why are they dead?”  
I wouldn’t know what to say. Not now, at any rate.  
Nor does it seem to me that the others know.  
Perhaps only the dead know, and only for them is the war really over.’*

**CESARE PAVESE**, *The House on the Hill* (1949).

The wreckage of a Kittyhawk P-40 that crashed in the North African desert in 1942 where it lay undiscovered for 70 years. The fate of the pilot remains uncertain but human bones found nearby suggest he died in the desert after leaving the plane.  
(Photograph attributed to J Perka.)<sup>50</sup>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Jack's War* owes a huge debt of gratitude to the assistance given by James Oglethorpe, war historian and No. 3 Squadron website maestro. He brought encouragement, research support, historical accuracy, and wonderful stories to the book.

Nigel Daw of the South Australian Aviation Museum provided invaluable information about the rescue in the 1970s, and the current restoration, of the Fairey Battle aircraft that Jack located, with its crew, after it had crashed in the South Australian mangroves in 1943.

The Australian War Memorial and other government archives were outstanding sources of detailed and carefully catalogued information.

Tom Russell gets a mention ten times in Jack's diaries. At 96 years of age, Tom is alive and well, and living with his wife Enid at Miranda in Sydney where they have a splendid view of aircraft zooming into Kingsford Smith Airport. Tom's still sharp memory brought forth stories and his own diaries provided additional information. And his gift of a set of antique 458 Squadron place-mats will always be treasured. Thanks to Alan Righetti, also a No. 3 Squadron veteran mentioned by Jack. Alan sent copies of the relevant, and beautifully detailed, pages of his diary. Alan now spends his days at Sunshine Beach, Queensland.

Coming across Jane Rumbold working in the Rare Books Collection at Monash University was one of those serendipitous events for which the researcher always hopes. Jane was an unexpectedly rich source of information, images, and expertise in providing a copy of *Grin With Jack Lusby* from the Rare Books Collection. She was also a delight to chat with.

Jane's father, Derek Rumbold, who flew Spitfires in New Guinea during WWII, very generously revisited the past to add to Jack's description of a pilot about whom there was little information.

I am grateful to Paul Slessor for his permission to use Kenneth Slessor's evocative poem, 'Beach Burial', written at El Alamein in 1942.

The extended Lusby clan provided goodwill and great stories from its shared family history. I doff my hat to clan member, Margaret Clark (of margie clark media services), for her impressive proof-reading skills and understanding of the project.

As usual my life's mate, Fred, worked with me, reading the manuscript, tossing around ideas, and digging deep for his book design.

And finally, the men (and women) who people the pages of Jack's diaries bring the past magnificently alive. Their extraordinary stories give colour and substance to the sparse, and often enigmatic, jottings kept in war archives. *Jack's War* is dedicated to all the men and women who have served in war; and to the families and communities who waited for them to return – and mourned when they didn't.

## Jack's War – Introduction

Jack Lusby (1913 – 1980) was a well-known Australian cartoonist and short story writer from the mid 1930s to the 1960s. Jack interrupted his career to serve as an RAAF pilot during World War II and wrote about his wartime experiences in three journals covering the period from March 25, 1942 until 1945. His colourful and historically accurate journal follows his training as a pilot at Sale in Victoria and Wagga Wagga in NSW; his journey to the Middle East via Ceylon (as it was called then); re-training at El Ballah in Egypt to fly Kittyhawks; experiences as a pilot in the Middle East; and finally his return to Australia where he was one of the lucky ones to survive testing Spitfire aircraft. (Of the sixty pilots with whom he trained, only eleven survived.) The journal ends at Amberley, Queensland, in 1945 after his marriage to Sheila Drummond and the birth of his son, Christopher.

During the war Jack illustrated and wrote for two magazines. He was the cartoonist for *Thumbs Up!* (1941) and for *Grin with Jack Lusby* (1945). Both were published by Frank Johnson in Sydney.

On his return to Australia from the Middle East in 1943, Jack, found time between testing Spitfires to resume cartooning. He picked up again with *The Bulletin* from September 1943.

Researching Jack's work has turned up more than 2,000 cartoons and more than 50 short stories published from the 1930s to the 1960s. They appeared mainly in *The Bulletin* but also in anthologies, in the old *Smith's Weekly*, the *Daily*, *The Washington Post*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *Post Magazine*. Trove has a listing of more than 1,200 cartoons published in Brisbane's *Courier-Mail* alone (from his time as head cartoonist there). This was from about 1945 until 1949 when he replaced Ian Gall who was on leave in London. His cartoons still appear in odd places like the *It's Moments Like These You Need Minties Diary* (1990). (Many Australian cartoonists submitted cartoons for Minties over the years.)

Jack's first short stories appeared in *Smith's Weekly* under the pseudonym, 'Freddie', which he used again in his early *Bulletin* stories. His stories were republished in anthologies such as *Coast to Coast*, 1959-60; *The Bulletin Christmas Edition*, 1958; *The Penguin Book of Australian Short Stories* (Vol 2); *Selected Australian Stories* (1963); *Australian Short Stories, Second Series* (1963); and *Short Stories from the Second World War* (1982). These are the ones I've been able to track but there are many more. His cartoons have often appeared without permission





or acknowledgement and I assume the same has occurred with his stories. (Copyright was much less formalised then than now.)

Jack began studying art at Sydney's Julian Ashton Art School in 1926 (while he was still attending Sydney Boys' High School). When he finished school he began a cadetship in journalism with *The Daily Telegraph*. By the mid 1930s he was part of Sydney's pre-war bohemian scene of journalists, writers and artists, many of whom, like Jack, belonged to the Black and White Artists' Club. He was a close friend of Norman Lindsay's family, particularly of fellow cartoonist, Percy Lindsay, and shared a lively art studio near the lower end of George Street with his close friend and fellow artist, Les Such. Politicians often climbed the rickety stairs to the studio to sit for the caricatures Jack and Les drew for the newspapers of the day.

It was here Jack first met John Goffage, a wine salesman later to become better known as the Australian actor, Chips Rafferty. Chips lugged his suitcase of wine samples up the rickety stairs one afternoon to an enthusiastic welcome from the two artists. He left the studio many hours later with his suitcase lighter for the experience. Chips' wife, Quentin, was to become my godmother.

Jack's career as an artist and writer located him in a particularly vibrant era of Australian cultural history from about 1935 to the 1960s. The black and white artists were at the heart of Australia's cultural scene in those years. Douglas Stewart, poet and *Bulletin* editor, captures them and the ebullient spirit of Sydney's pre-war bohemia in his 1977 *Boyer Lectures*. In the lecture, 'The Bulletin as I Knew It', he describes pre-war Sydney hangouts, one being 'Mockbell's' which was 'situated with the utmost convenience right next door to *The Bulletin*' – with a discreet back entrance.<sup>1</sup> The poets, journalists, artists and writers who frequented Mockbell's also enlivened another artists' refuge, the Bateman's Hotel.



Jack with fellow cartoonists at the Black and White Artists' Club in the mid 1930s. Jack, with characteristic grin, is middle row, second from the left, next to girl centre holding the jug!

Bateman's Hotel was favoured, Stewart writes, by 'the wider, wilder group of bohemians', the black and white artists and the short story writers. 'Joining us there would be Olaf Ruhen, whose territory ranged from New Zealand to New Guinea; and Jack Lusby who also wrote about New Guinea and the RAAF, as well as drawing joke-blocks for us.'<sup>2</sup> Jack's life with the black and white artists and Sydney's bohemian culture adds another, riotous, layer to the public aspect of his pre-war life. And this probably contributed to his ability to find humour in the descriptions of his war experiences – until the final entries.

Jack was born in Sydney in 1913. His mother, Caroline Fitzhenry, had been the prettiest girl in Ballina, according to his father, John Lusby snr. John was a school principal in rural NSW until his eventual teaching appointment in Sydney. The time spent in country towns could well account for Jack's ability to get along with people everywhere. (He swam the Macleay River at Kempsey with the Indigenous kids and had a swag of admiring stories about them. After school he bicycled around the town and rural areas of Kempsey delivering telegrams. He spent so much time in local homes, eating scones and listening to yarns, the post office called him, 'Speedy' – because he was so slow). Whether or not his time spent in Australian country towns contributed to Jack's gift for collecting stories, his conviviality, combined with a striking memory for yarns, dates, people and places, are a feature of his war diaries.

From the outset Jack knew what he wanted to do in life. He wrote in his unpublished autobiography:

There were two dreams and they were very simple and real; the place was a pinpoint on the map, Balranald in the western Riverina, at the junction of the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers. There, I decided to become a newspaper cartoonist and an aeroplane pilot.

A travelling showman brought a silent, flickering film to the township; this showed a small biplane attacking a German observation balloon despite puffs of smoke and bright flashes from protecting anti-aircraft guns. The aeroplane was hit and spun down like a leaf to explode on the ground. Short as this film was, my mind was made up to become a pilot.

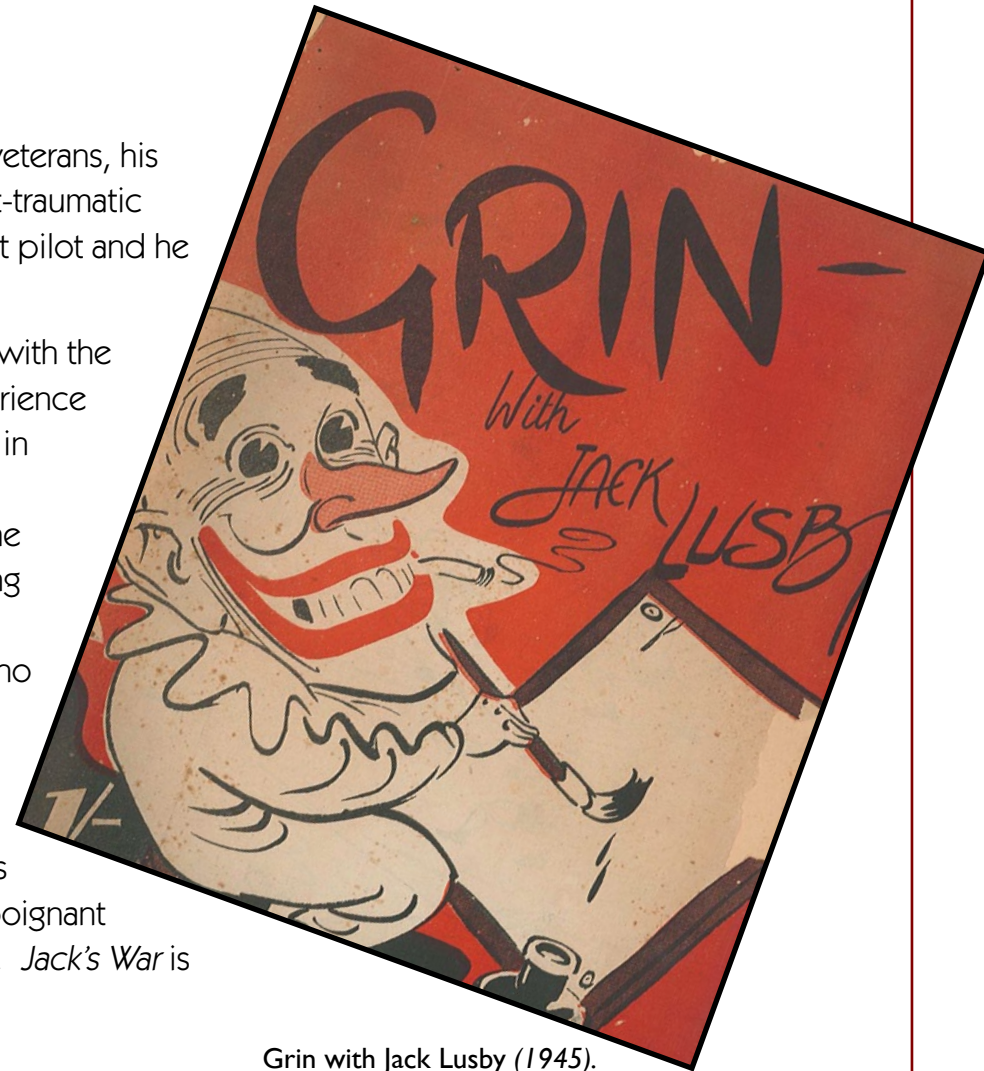


*Jack aged 25 flying at Bourke, December, 1938.*

Jack realised both of his childhood dreams. But, like so many war veterans, his wartime experiences left him with what is recognised today as post-traumatic stress disorder. Basically, his nerves were shot from his time as a test pilot and he carried the burden of survivor guilt.

The diaries begin after Jack's enlistment in the RAAF in March 1941 with the final entry in 1945. During this time a change in Jack's wartime experience becomes evident. From the camaraderie and fascination with flying in Book One there emerges a growing desperation during Book Three. (The disintegration of Jack's handwriting in Book Three says it all.) The short story, ['A Flying Fragment'](#), is a vivid description of combat flying and typical conditions on a training base in North Africa. In it Jack describes the hair-raising experience of a pilot on a training flight who unexpectedly finds himself in combat, fighting for his life.

This is a young man's journey through the extraordinary experiences of war, brought to life by the writer's eye for detail and a cartoonist's comic twist on things. The diaries are infused with Jack's affection for friends and those he encounters, making all the more poignant his sorrow at comrades 'lost' in action, accidents, and faulty aircraft. *Jack's War* is history imbued with humour and, ultimately, with the unavoidable sadness of war.



*Grin with Jack Lusby (1945).*

*Image courtesy The Rare Books Collection, Monash University Library.*

Jack's War has been transcribed with biographical and historical commentary by Maria (Lusby) Simms, 2012.

© Maria Simms 2012. All rights reserved.

Contact: Maria Simms at [mariasimms47@gmail.com](mailto:mariasimms47@gmail.com)



## And So it Begins!



Jack now a pilot. He has his flying badge so it's probably November, 1941.

John V. Lusby's clever black-and-white work, for some years a BULLETIN feature, will be missed in the months to come, for the artist has joined the R.A.A.F. He's a Sydneysider, born at Drummoyne 28 years ago, and had most of his early art training at Julian Ashton's school. Since his early teens he has had a strong interest in flying. He helped to build a glider, and this led to a course of instruction at the Macquarie Flying School, conducted by Edward Macarthur-



Onslow. A book of Jack Lusby's drawings, *Thumbs Up*, has just been published and is selling well. 16.4.41

Above: Cartoon by John Frith, fellow Bulletin Cartoonist. (Original in Jack's collection.)



# *Jack's War – Book 1*

25 March, 1942 – 21 October, 1942

## No. 3 Squadron – The Western Desert – North Africa



Western Desert, North Africa. c. 1941.  
A group of No. 3 Squadron RAAF members standing in front of three of the Squadron's Tomahawk fighter aircraft.  
(Photograph: G Silk, 1941.)<sup>4</sup>

## North Africa and the Mediterranean

Section from No. 458 Squadron's Operational Map of the Middle East



Nos. 3 and 458 Squadrons were based in North Africa. Although Jack was posted to No. 3 Squadron he was 'loaned out' to No. 458 Squadron based at El Shallufa on the Suez Canal east of the Nile Delta, Egypt. No. 3 Squadron spent two memorable weeks based at Marble Arch in Libya at the end of 1942. Marble Arch can be seen on the map above near the lowest 'dip' of the Mediterranean. Both squadrons flew operations throughout the Middle East, Egypt, the Mediterranean, Sicily and into Italy.  
(Map supplied by Tom Russell; prepared by Jock McGowen; and drawn by Tom Moore.<sup>3</sup>)



*Wirraways flying in formation at the Service Flying Training Unit, Wagga Wagga. Although this photograph is in Jack's collection – with his name scrawled on the back – it was most likely to have been taken in June 1941, just before Jack's arrival at Wagga Wagga, NSW, in July. The original was included in a set donated to the Australian War Memorial by Dick Creswell.*

**Operational Training Unit, Sale [Victoria] Mar. 25 1942**

I'm here for a further 25 hours on Wirras before a posting to P-40 Squadron. The flying's nice and hairy – plenty of combat, shooting, ground strafing and improvised manoeuvres that defy description. The aerodrome is new and living conditions are bloody awful.

**Editor's note.** (Editor's commentary appears beneath journal entries throughout *Jack's War*. Notes are at the end of each Book.)



### Editor's commentary:

**ON HIS** enlistment in March, 1941, Jack was posted to the Initial Training School (ITS) at Bradfield Park, Sydney. Australian War Memorial historian, Adam Purcell, writes on his blog, 'Many thousands of airmen (and women, for there was also a WAAAF school on site) would experience their first taste of the Air Force at this station'.<sup>5</sup>

Jack was then posted in May to the Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) at Narromine in central NSW. In July he went to No. 2 Service Flying Training School, Wagga Wagga, for 12 weeks of intermediate and advanced operational flying instruction.<sup>6</sup> By the time he reached Sale in 1942 Jack had been training as a pilot for almost a year. The EFTS at Narromine graduated 2,850 pilots over a four year period with a relatively few, 17 in all, fatal flying accidents.<sup>44</sup> This was good going considering the significant accident rate in the flying schools, particularly in the early years of the war. According to the RAAF Museum 2,832 aircrew were killed in flying training accidents during WWII.<sup>45</sup> The P-40s Jack mentions would have been Kittyhawks but he was mainly flying Wirraways at Sale and Wagga Wagga because when he has arrived in the Middle East he received further training to flying Kittyhawks.



*Jack, South Australia. 1941.*



*The Tiger Moth Trainer, Narromine, 1940.  
(Photograph: Jack's collection.)*

### Good Friday, 3 April 1942

A new bloke brought a new one in on its belly. Just forgot about the wheels! Mitch and Mart Law have followed us over from S.A.

We've got a new flight commander back from Malaya. Giving us the g.g. [intelligence] on Japs.

Harbour 'K' and Ted Hawke have left en route to 3 Squadron Libya. Lucky!! They'll be flying with aces all round them. We drank them onto the train.

**KEN HARBOUR** was to take part in No. 3 Squadron's famous strafing operation of the German 21 Panzer Division in Tunisia in 1943, but more about that down the track.<sup>7</sup> And Martin Law was to have a narrow escape in 1945 when the Beaufort he was flying as second pilot crash landed during a test flight at Darwin's Pell Airstrip.<sup>8</sup> Mitch's identity remains elusive.

### Thurs. 9 April 1942

I've been posted to 3 Squadron. Off home to Sydney for a week's pre-embarkation leave. Others are going off up North. Several of us are coming my way, including Bob Wardrobe who celebrated the occasion by dive-bombing a Victorian radio station, apparently mistaking it for a practice-target. Much strife.

**BOB WARDROBE** worked in advertising before the war which may explain his decision to dive-bomb a radio station. The strife on this occasion was a 'Severe Reprimand' by Wing Commander Dalton for 'Being guilty of neglect in the use of an Aircraft, in that he on the 4/4/42, whilst flying over W. Brewer's property at Sale, released 6 practice bombs likely to cause loss of life or bodily injury to any person'.<sup>9</sup> Jack describes Bob's many such youthful enthusiasms with amusement and affection.

### At Sea, Monday 14 July 1942

We're down south among the old man rollers and the Albatrosses.

We saw another ship to-day but apparently a 'goody'. The sight stimulated our skipper to order gun practice.

The storm damage was fixed at Adelaide and all is ok once more.

I noticed the black cat Mac acquired at Adelaide sitting on one of the emergency rafts, rather disconsolately. Apparently it's not optimistic.

**JACK WOULD** have left the Sale Training Unit and been en route by ship for the Middle East by the time he was writing this entry. They were aboard the S.S. *Mulberrra* sailing via the Great Australian Bight towards Western Australia and Fremantle before heading for Sri Lanka then the Middle East.<sup>10</sup>



Cartoon: Thumbs Up (1941).<sup>46</sup>

No. 3 Squadron was by this stage based in North Africa. It had been involved in the first Allied campaign in Libya between November 1940 and April 1941, and played a critical role in the allied invasion of Syria in June and July. In September 1941 it returned to the tug of war over North Africa, which finally ended with the defeat of the German and Italian forces in Tunisia in May 1943.<sup>11</sup>

The Squadron was to provide crucial air support for ground forces in the Battles of El Alamein in July and October, 1942. Then, operating from Malta initially, it supported Allied operations in Sicily between July and August 1943. Sicily was a stepping-stone to Italy, which became 3 Squadron's principal area of operations for the rest of the war.

By January, 1941, 3 Squadron's original aircraft had been replaced by Hawker Hurricanes, but for most of the war its principal workhorse was the American-built Curtis P-40 (initially called Tomahawk then Kittyhawk). No. 3 Squadron introduced Kittyhawks in December 1941.<sup>12</sup>

On their arrival in the Middle East Jack and his companions were trained for air combat in Kittyhawks at El Ballah, Egypt – 'converting to Kitties' it was called.

## **Tues. 15 July 1942**

Pilots are generally extremely critical of anybody else's flying but we spend a lot of time admiring the aeronautical aiming of the Albatrosses. They make an occasional doubtful manoeuvre, but it's generally conceded these fowl have the game sewn up.

We also check up on the porpoises as they slow-roll and cross-over under the bows.



*Wirraways flying in formation – akin to the school of porpoises crossing over and slow rolling under the ship's bows? (Photograph: Jack's collection.)*



### **Thursday 16 July 1942**

We had a visitor at sunrise – An American scout plane dived from nowhere and whizzed round the ship. Had us out in our pyjamas and shaving soap. Our flag was hauled up, there was a lamp signals exchange (and off he went).

### **Monday 20 July 1942**

Fremantle is now twelve hours astern. We had an overnight stay. Now we're zig-zagging out into the Indian Ocean. We have no convoy. The ship can do eleven knots if pushed! I'm learning Hindustani from the cabin boy so that when foreigners no savvy I can dazzle them with science.

### **Wed. 22 July 1942**

We had a drink to the last party of replacements for 3 Squadron. Their ship is on the bed of ocean hereabouts. Down with all hands 3 days out of Fremantle.

**D****ESPITE EXTENSIVE** searches by war historian, James Oglethorpe, no record can be found of a troop ship being lost in the Indian Ocean, three days out of Fremantle, with No. 3 Squadron members aboard.

However, Tom Russell, a No. 3 Squadron pilot mentioned often by Jack, recalls that when they arrived in the Middle East, somebody said to him, 'We thought you boys had been sunk!' So there must be something to it. Information about this mystery ship would be welcome.

### **Thurs. 23 July 1942**

An Indian naval sloop has signalled it was attacked by a Jap warship 150 miles from our position. It was the HMIS Hindustan.

Mac's cat was sighted again today.

My cabin boy, Nazis – was at Singapore on a ship skippered by a very fat captain. When the 'All-clear' sounded he was found wedged so tightly beneath his bunk that several of the crew sweated profusely extracting him.

We're up into the warm weather now. Flying fish and sunbaking. I spend a lot of time at the bows gazing down past the rusty old anchor into the clear cool water behind the bow-wave.

At times you can see clear down to the keel and read the Roman figures below the surface.

**Sat. 25 July 1942**

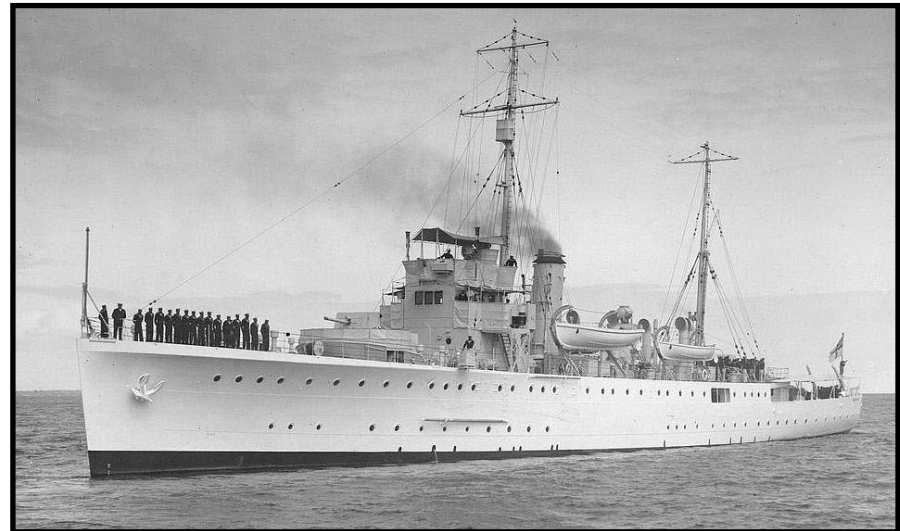
We arrived in Colombo this morning. A signal was awaiting us from Australia to disembark at Ceylon and wait for further instructions.

**Sun. 26 July 1942**

I'm not greatly taken with Colombo itself. Last night Dave Lightbody and three of us taxied out to a dance at the Colombo Town Hall. The drivers here are absolutely crazy. They go flat out through the black out – honking like mad and leaving the rest to Buddha.

**Tues. 4 Aug. 1942**

Seventy miles down the coast from Colombo we're living in long, low palm leaf dwellings on a racecourse near Galle. In the 'wet' part of the island. From the beaches, lined with outrigger canoes and the huts of the fishermen, the coco-nut palms stretch back inland so thickly you can't walk through except on narrow native paths connecting the numerous little villages.



*HMIS Hindustan. During WWII as part of the Eastern Fleet it escorted convoys in the Indian Ocean. (Photograph: A C Green, State Library of Victoria.<sup>13</sup>)*



*Aerial view of the Colombo docks, 1942, shortly before the assault by Japanese bombers on 5 April, 1942. (Photograph: Lankapura historical image collection.<sup>14</sup>)*

There is evidence of early Dutch colonisation in the Singhalese homes of the better-off class.

The European section of Galle is contained wholly within the old Dutch fort.

The women wear little blouses, above their saris, which are of Portuguese origin. Fishing and coco-nuts provide the main means of subsistence.

The locals eat the nut 'meat', drink the milk, make rope and God knows what else with fibre, build their roofs and often the walls with palm leaf – they lace their canoes together with it.

They are a bright and cheerful crowd. The adults small and the children microscopic.

Here and there in a small clearing you come on a school where a Singhalese teacher instructs these morsels in a surprising variety of subjects including English.

If you get thirsty out in the jungle you can despatch the nearest child to the top of a palm for a nut, knock the top off, and there's your drink!

These little fellows trot along after us wherever we go in the hope that they may be called upon to perform some small remunerative service.



*View along a palm-fringed beach with outrigger canoes at Mount Lavinia in Sri Lanka, situated south of Colombo. (Photograph: Lankapura historic Image collection 1903.)<sup>15</sup>*

**THE JAPANESE** airforce had attacked Sri Lanka (or Ceylon as it was then) in the Easter Sunday Raid of 5 April, 1942. The raid was part of the Japanese hunt for the British Eastern Fleet in the Indian Ocean. The Ceylonese, having heard about the Nanjing Massacres in China, were reputedly fearful for their fate should the Japanese invade and many fled by boat to India.<sup>16</sup>



This may explain the jumpiness of the allied fleet fighters described by Jack in the next entry – although subsequent descriptions of the time spent in Ceylon read like a tropical holiday.

**Fri. 7 Aug. 1942**

One of our fleet fighters here has put a few bursts into the Catalina Flying Boat mistaking it for a Jap. They're still trying to figure out how the pilot brought it home. No rudder, no ailerons, 2nd pilot dead, gunner wounded and he landed it at night back on the home lake.

Other fleet fighters shot down a Jap flying boat same day – tally square.



Entrance to the Old Dutch Fort at Galle. (Photograph: Lankapura historical image collection 1900.)<sup>17</sup>

## American-built Catalina Flying Boats used by the RAAF.



A Catalina making a 'rough water' landing. (Photograph: Nichols 1941.)<sup>18</sup>

**Catalina Flying**  
Boats made their  
bases at drowsy little  
atolls, specks of land  
in the ocean, and  
patrolled vast tracts  
of ocean from there.



Above: Catalinas setting out on patrol.  
(Photograph: Nichols 1941.)<sup>19</sup>

**CATALINAS ESCORTED** convoys, carried out long-range bombing raids, and undertook routine patrols and anti-submarine reconnaissance. But their regular job was patrolling vast areas of ocean. In September 1945 eight Catalinas flew members of 8th Division, ex-prisoners of war of the Japanese, from Singapore to Rose Bay in Sydney. The Melbourne *Argus* described the 'tumultuous welcome' by thousands of people waiting in Sydney when the Catalina Flying Boats landed bringing 110 of the ex POWs from the 'horror of Changi Gaol in Singapore'. Changi was designed to hold 600 civil criminals under peacetime conditions but the Japanese used it to hold 6,000 Australians.<sup>20</sup> From Rose Bay the POWs were taken to Concord Repatriation Hospital.

As part of the ceremonial welcome for the POWs, Jack's sister, Dr Gwen Lusby, was waiting outside the hospital to receive them. However, there was a hold-up while officials kept the POWs clustered outside the entrance.

'What are you waiting for,' Gwen finally asked an official. She'd become tired and was leaning against the front wall of the hospital.

'We're waiting for the doctor in charge,' was the reply.

'I am the doctor in charge,' Gwen said.

When the officials recovered from their amazement at finding a woman running the hospital the ceremony began.

There is more on Jack's description of the 'friendly' fire on the Catalina. J.F. Somerville, Admiral and Commander in Chief of the Eastern Fleet, wrote about it in his report to the British Naval Command dated 19 August, 1942.

Item number 78 of Admiral Somerville's report reads:

'At 1850 ILLUSTRIOUS reported an aircraft in sight bearing 190 degrees and directed the fighter umbrella of two Fulmars to investigate. This aircraft which was clearly in sight from WARSPITE was a flying boat just visible above the horizon and though it presented characteristics of a Catalina, it could not definitely be identified as such. ILLUSTRIOUS directed the Fulmars on to the target, a warning being given by R/T that the aircraft was possibly friendly. Unfortunately the designation "Bandit" i.e. enemy aircraft, as opposed to "Bogey" i.e. unidentified aircraft, was employed by the Fighter Directing Officer. For this and other reasons which are being investigated by a Board of Enquiry one of the Fulmars opened fire on this flying boat, which proved to be a Catalina. Fire was ceased directly the pilot realized his mistake but I regret to report that one airman was killed and two injured and the Catalina's rudder damaged. The Fulmars returned to ILLUSTRIOUS and from subsequent signals it appeared that the Catalina was still airborne and returning to her base. As a safety measure MAURITIUS and MANXMAN were detached to search the area in case the Catalina was forced to land, but were recalled when it was clear from the radar bearings that the Catalina was proceeding to Koggala.'<sup>21</sup>

**Sat. 8 Aug. 1942**

The surf here is good. Most afternoons we risk our necks in a taxi ride to Galle, then rickshaw a couple of miles round the beach to the best place, and shoot em a la Bondi for an hour or two somewhat to the astonishment of the Englishmen, Canadians and the Singhalese.

Generally the rickshaw gentry wait patiently in the shade of the coco-palms till we finish, but to-day when we came out there were none to be seen so we waited up on the road till a bus arrived and climbed on the roof. As the vehicle hurtled forward – through the bullock carts and peasantry – sounds from below seemed to indicate that the bus was disintegrating. Above the chattering of the native passengers within we heard Pete announcing that Bob Wardrobe had got inside and was pulling the bus to pieces.

Finding the interior warm he'd used a little too much force in seeking ventilation and had pushed his arms through a couple of windows, which then came unhinged and fell out onto the roadway. The driver and conductors thought it a great joke and drove on with usual recklessness while the Wardrobe's gore sprayed the interior like betel juice.

At the end of the ride they led him to a dispensary where a local doctor and his retinue knocked off their poker game to stitch his arm.

It's quite a thrill riding on the roof of a local bus. You cling on like grim death ducking as low-hanging palms sweep over you, and occasionally opening your eyes to look at everything scattering ahead.

Sometimes at night we dine at the Green Café in the fort (European quarter). I made quite a hit with the Muslim management by playing Arabic music on the gramophone pick-up and pretending to enjoy it.

**PETER GILBERT** was a first year medical student when he enlisted in the RAAF aged 19. He arrived at the Operations Training Unit in Sale, Victoria, with Jack in March 1942. They were both posted to No. 3 Squadron and travelled to the Middle East in the same cohort but Peter remained flying in Middle East – with a stint at Malta – until he embarked at Suez and headed for Melbourne at the end of 1944.<sup>22</sup>

From the opening description of Bob Wardrobe's bombing of the radio station to their time in the Middle East, Bob Wardrobe's colourful and endearing antics weave through Jack's journal. He was twenty when he enlisted and he trained with Jack at Sale and travelled overseas



with the same cohort. He also kept a diary.<sup>23</sup> If only it could be found!

### **Wed. 12 Aug. 1942**

Bob Wardrobe and I went shopping. The proprietors of the little local emporiums have the right idea. They sit you under a fan and bring you cups of tea during the long process of arriving at a reasonable price. We're becoming fairly good at this business, and observe the correct etiquette in conducting transactions in the bazaar. For instance the tailors must be handled very differently to the gem vendors. The latter, when the discussion reaches the 'how much' stage, name a fantastic price which neither party takes very seriously. When the vendor ultimately, with a gesture of despair and resignation, names his bedrock figure, you repeat your own price, politely take your leave and mention that you'll call again tomorrow.

Sometimes the second visit is not necessary.

Often tiny children follow the sales talk with intense interest, learning the game young, and learning it very well.

The tailors don't bargain or haggle. Their fees are fixed irrevocably and you take it or leave it.

We're having some light-weight tunics made. Our uniforms are fast becoming rather varied. We have them made to suit our own tastes, and nobody out here cares a lot about it. I'm thinking of using a sarong instead of shorts, but can't strike one in the right colour.

Out in the surf I saw a huge turtle flapping along in a wave behind Bob Wardrobe, and shouted, 'Mind the turtle.'

But he only saw its head out of the corner of his eye and thought, Shark, and made frenzied efforts to shoot the wave in.



*Sri Lankan stall holder with apprentice.  
(Photograph Lankapura historical image collection.)<sup>47</sup>*

The turtle is so astonished at the sudden kicking and splashing that the wave nearly brought it along too.

We learned that the turtle has lived just thereabouts for years.

We came home on the roof of a bus reclining among a lot of bananas. We ate a lot of these en-route, occasionally tossing a few very generously to the local children on the roadway.

The owner of the fruit was inside the bus and laughed uproariously at the kids scrambling for his bananas.

Last night Pete Gilbert, Shearman, and I imbibed 'bahut sarab' in the mess and paid a 2 a.m. call on Arthur Dawkins and Ron Matthews. The resulting shambles has caused widespread comment this morning.

Apparently we wrecked their quarters and woke half the camp. One of our 'aircraft' failed to return – Gilbert. Some Canadians found him somewhere and bunked him in for the remainder of the night.

It's the second time they've looked after him. We get on extremely well with the Canadians. They're a fine crowd.

Their M.O. [Medical Officer] and the Camp Commandant often come over to our Sergeants' Mess with Dawkins and Matthews and hold wassail and song with us. These parties become very bright very soon because in this climate alcohol seems to take effect very quickly. We don't need to drink very much.

**DAVID (MICK)** Shearman, Bob Wardrobe, Pete Gilbert, and Jack's service records show them meeting up while training as pilots at Wagga Wagga or Sale (where Jack made many of the friends scattered throughout his journal). They then arrived together at the Melbourne Embarkation Depot in April, 1942 where they spent almost three months before boarding a troop ship for the Middle East on 3 July, 1942.<sup>24</sup>

The ship they sailed on had remained a mystery until Ron Matthews' service record reveals him also leaving Melbourne on 3 July aboard the *S.S. Mulberra*.<sup>25</sup>

After what was obviously a colourful journey they were posted to No. 3 Squadron when they arrived at the No. 21 Personnel Transit Centre, Kasfareet, in September, 1942. Jack and Pete Gilbert were then loaned to other squadrons in the Middle East, Jack to the multinational No. 458 Squadron and Pete to the RAF's 203 Group where he remained for over two years.<sup>26</sup>

Ron Matthews also trained with Jack's crowd but remained with No. 3 Squadron.<sup>27</sup> He and Arthur Dawkins often turn up together in the pages of Jack's journal. While they were in the Middle East Matthews and Dawkins both flew operations in Italy.<sup>28</sup>

### Friday 14 Aug. 1942

A couple of Hurricanes [British fighter aircraft] 'shot up' the camp. [Shot up is slang for making a low-level pass.] They caused slight consternation at first as they came head-on at us about palm high into the clearing and could have been anything. They were certainly hiking.

Yesterday we turned out to play a cricket team Dawkins claimed to have discovered. Our opponents turned out to be the pyjama clad under-graduates of the 'college'. Otherwise known as V.D. cases. In the shade of the palms squatted long rows of their confreres to supply the barracking. Mostly they were English with a few Canadians.

Anyway they played pretty well and we enjoyed the game. Looked a healthy lot too. Brown as berries and cheerful.

Last night the departing Canadians officially, and with due pomp and ceremony, handed over the Sergeants' Mess to us Australians. Les showed an unexpected flair for poker-faced oratory. Even the pet monkey got very drunk and leaped hilariously about the mess missing his objectives by several inches. Then he became very drowsy and affectionate, which is unusual for him.

Ploughing through the sand to our quarters is the hardest part of these soirees.



No. 3 Squadron pilot, 'Tiny' Cameron, with his famous pet monkey, Buzz, in North Africa, 1941. (Photographs: No. 3 Squadron Website.<sup>29</sup>)



Cartoon: Grin With Jack Lusby (1945).<sup>30</sup>



**Monday 17 Aug. 1942**

Raining heavily tonight. It's the first time since we reached Ceylon. And it's quite cool. We've been just lying on our bunks listening to the rain and the surf.

Liquor affects 'Perelli' very strongly. Last night he walked through a thatch hut leaving a hole on each side as if a shell had done some damage.

No recollection of it – the outraged occupants identified him today as the trajectory.

It was reminiscent of the Fremantle episode when he gained the nickname.

Most of the English and Canadians who've been waiting here have gone now. We Australian Sergeants are running the camp after a fashion.

We're constantly breaking in new cooks and mess orderlies as others are posted.

Now we run the orderly room and scratch out our own D.R.O.s [Daily Routine Orders], mete out the justice, censor the letters.

Ted Strom is the caterer – for the mess table, and holds long discussions with the a bespectacled Ceylonese vendor of fruits and vegetables who always carries a folded umbrella and is accompanied by an equally dignified looking aide.

Les Anderson shares Orderly Officer with Dawkins and Matthews and is quite popular with the Canadian and English aircrafts men. I'm afraid we give him a rough time, but think he has sufficient humour in his system to take it.

**RAF plane Ceylon  
– this one not going so fast!**



*An elephant towing a Corsair (Chance Vought F4U) fighter aircraft, at an airfield near Kalpitiya (Puttalam), Ceylon 1944. (Lankapura: Historic Images of Sri Lanka.)<sup>31</sup>*

Despite an acute shortage of liquor, Les and Ted continue to stock our mess in a manner that makes the officers' messes in Ceylon seem like YMCA huts.

On a 'special' night, which occurs pretty frequently of late, 48 bottles of beer generally go off and some hard stuff. But next day the stocks are miraculously replenished.

And a Kogalla pilot told me that in their mess the ration is one bottle of beer per officer per week. Here's hoping the tactics of messrs. Anderson and Strom remain undiscovered.

We find that the pet monkey doesn't like native Ceylonese. He flies at Charles, our sleeping hut boy, and scares the Hell out of him. And a more inoffensive soul than Charles I can't imagine.

When are we going to fly again?

#### **Sat. 22 Aug. 1942**

I've had dengue fever for the last few days, but am ok now. We had rain in bucketfuls last night.

Charles arrived a couple of hours late yesterday. He announced by way of explanation that a storm had blown a palm down, flattening his house. Explanation accepted.

We shifted quarters in a cloudburst. I noticed cluster of natives sheltering in a thatched hut, when a gust demolished it. The air was full of pieces and the velocity of the departing occupants would have defied a Graflex.

[A Graflex camera that took high speed images – often used for sports photography.]

#### **Tues. 1 Sept. 1942**

We're 3 days out from Bombay en-route to Aden and Suez. We are 4 smallish troopships with a sloop escort. The sloop should have left us yesterday but heard there was strife ahead so it stayed with us.

1600 raw Indian troops are aboard ours. Mass mal-de-mer! Most had never seen the sea before. I was down with

dengue in Ceylon when our little party were ordered to move. I caught a train across the island to the northern tip. Then a little steamer to the Indian coast. Then a train up to Madras and another right across India to Bombay.

Owing to forementioned malady and the monotony of train travel I didn't look on India with much favour. Still, we had a bloody good look at it. Rioters were looting and burning trains but ours went across untouched. A mob attacking a Calcutta Bombay troop train the night before we reached Bombay was mowed down by Tommy-gun fire from the troops aboard. Picked a hard train.

We've managed to get the rabble on this ship into some semblance of order at the boat stations [for lifeboat drill], but they haven't the haziest notion of what it's all about.

They include everything from Madrasis to Sikhs, and most joined the army 3 weeks ago.

For air raid alarms we hunt them down below, and immediately chase them up top for the boat stations. They're convinced we're crazy.

The scene, if we're torpedoed at night, will make Dante's 'Inferno' a feeble effort.



Cartoon: Jack Lusby, Thumbs Up! (1941).<sup>32</sup>

**HAVING BEEN** left behind in Ceylon owing to his illness, Jack was determined to catch up with his No. 3 Squadron companions who were by then en route to the Middle East. As soon as he was well enough to travel he took a steamer to India from northern Ceylon – Sri Lanka as it is now – then, as he describes, he travelled overland from eastern India to catch up with the Squadron in Bombay before they left in a ship convoy heading for the Middle East.



**Wed. 2 Sept. 1942**

Mac introduced a Sikh 2nd Lieutenant to me – Narindah Singh Sahdi – and left me to entertain him.

He's a fine type – head turban etc., and a cheerful devotee of Bacchus. I've kept my end up for last two nights, but in my present weakened condition I'm looking around for someone to take over.

We've got a submarine in our track and orders are to sleep at the boat stations.

I think the Indian troops are overtrained now – the adjacent ship blasted off a practice alarm on its steam whistle and before we could stop them our mob streamed up from the nether regions to the boat stations.

**3 Sept. 1942**

Our friend the sub was seen again by some ship just ahead of us. We're just entering the Gulf of Aden. Sitting idle on small slow ships waiting for subs and raiders to appear – not too entertaining.

Ours is lightly loaded so it should give us a bit of time if we're hit.

The Indian troops are now streaming up to settle down for the night at boat positions. We pilots now do submarine watches on the bridge.

Sahdi and I have devised new gamble using marbles for racehorses, started off by the roll of the ship. But the American craps game is the first favourite – it certainly makes the rupees flow.

**8 Sept. 1942**

We reached Aden yesterday at mid-day and left at dusk. The last few days were pretty tense.

Subs are known to be on our track. They attacked ship ahead then missed us in dark and attacked a ship 50 miles astern.

Staring at the sea on sub watch is a bit of a strain – occasionally relieved by leaping marlin or appearance of sharks alongside. The latter are not very reassuring when we're expecting to be sunk.

One morning a strange ship stood off a few miles – a faint shape in haze. Our little escort buzzed over full of fight but the ship was apparently O.K.

For the last two days a Blenheim bomber from Aden circled us, at times diving between ships at deck height for amusement.

When he first came on the scene he dropped a smoke marker as a challenge. The Bridge thought the marker indicated position of a sub. Much action!

At Aden, where we didn't stay long enough to go ashore, in came the SS 'Oronsay' thronged with scores of 'beautiful girls' and other civilian passengers, apparently evacuating Cairo and other Middle Eastern cities. All we could do was wave to them while we thought of dances and cocktails and the bright place Aden might be during their sojourn.

We're now boring up the Red Sea and preparing for bombing attacks towards the end of it.

At Aden, Sahdi left us with his Sikh troops. His brother is a Major stationed there, so he'll have company for his 'pegs [of whiskey] with ice'.

**T**he Oronsay was sunk by an Italian submarine in October, 1942.<sup>33</sup>

#### **Thurs. 10 Sept. 1942**

We're having fun with the Indian troops. In the Arabian Sea we taught them to rush up to the boat stations in event of sub attack. Now we're teaching them to dive below at an air attack. Very few speak English and glorious chaos often results. But we'll have them ready at the top of the Red Sea.

They're wondering why the sea isn't red. As we came through from Aden they kept a sharp lookout for a change of colour.

**17 Sept, 1942.**

Jack sent a cable home from 3 Squadron RAAF MEF.

Addressed to his mother, MRS J M LUSBY 51 DARLING ST ROSEVILLE SYDNEY, it read:

AM WELL AND FIT BEST WISHES XXX TO ALL AT HOME. MY ADDRESS IS XIS 3 SQUADRON RAAF MEF. LUSBY.

**Sat. 10 Oct. 1942 Almaza. [Approx. 6 miles East of Cairo.]**

Arrived at Suez Sept. 13. Until 30th September we stayed at Kasfareet transit camp about an hour's drive from Suez.

Then we came here to Almaza, just on the outskirts of Cairo. Two of us go off to Kitty conversion [re-training to fly Kittyhawks] at El Ballah near Ismailia every 3 days.

The conversion training is to take 10 days. Ron Matthews, Tom Russell, Ian Roediger and Dick Howie have gone already. We drew lots for places.

Russell and Roediger were up at the squadron with the rest of the earlier party of replacements, but the conversion was too sudden. John Mactaggart and John Manderson were killed and others had narrow escapes so they were sent back to convert with our party. Sandy Jones, Austin, and Harris got away with it and are on ops now – had a letter from Sandy. They heard we'd been sunk, and were pretty glad to see us. Bill Leeds and co. got through too, though we'd heard bad news about them.



Map of the Suez peninsula showing the Suez Canal and locations for Shallufa, Kasfareet, Ismailia and El Ballah transit camps and aerodromes. Cairo on the River Nile is approximately 130km west of the Canal. (Map © Fred Simms.)



A cove here called Peter Hannan was with Lew Trunley when he was killed on a Spitfire Channel sweep. Lew hit the sea in bad weather. Warnock, also from Wagga SFTS [Service Flight Training School], was with them and was shot down over France few days later.

We see every imaginable type of aircraft using the Almaza drome, from ancient Lysanders and Gladiators to Liberators and Spitfires.

We'd like to get Spits, as our Kitties take a bit of punishment from ME109s [Messerschmitts]. Still, 3 Squadron has taken over 200 Huns down using Kitties.

We have a strange variety of reading matter in our tent. Here's Luck by Lennie Lower. Cautious Amorist by Norman Lindsay – Bishops Jaegers by Thorne Smith and War Birds, a last war diary.

Here's Luck is a great favourite – even the Englishmen fight to get at it. It takes you back to Sydney.

Last night a super sandstorm wrecked the camp. Sand was so dense we wore gasmasks to breathe. As our tent became air-borne the four of us clung to it and brought it to earth before it could go for good.

One fellow was sitting peacefully in the latrine when it disintegrated into sheets of iron and left him perched on the can in the open.

Another chap was hit by a flying rafter which broke both his arms. As he stood in front of the M.O.'s tent another gust blew it flat.

The air was full of flying debris – a brick hit an extra tall Aussie on the head, and a couple more connected before he got to shelter.

The camp was a desolate sight this morning.



*'Western Desert Sand Storm' 1941. (Photograph: G Silk, 1941.)<sup>34</sup>*

**JACK WROTE** about their conversion training in Egypt in one of his best known stories, 'A Flying Fragment'. Aged 29, Jack would have been one of the oldest pilots in the squadron. Most were in their early twenties. The opening lines of the story give a clue to what follows:

It was hard on Mick Mooney that, near the end of his tether, he had to break in the oldest, rustiest bunch of pilots he'd encountered. Being the oldest, rustiest, and one of the slowest to get going, I was able to study him at uncomfortably close quarters. (From '[A Flying Fragment](#)'.)<sup>35</sup>

This story's humorous yet dramatic description of Kittyhawk training in the desert and the rag-tag mix of Australian, English, and Canadian pilots in the camp puts the story at the El Ballah conversion training camp near Ismailia described in the entry above. The story draws on Jack's memories to provide an excellent, albeit fictionalised, account of the camp, the characters and their training, and what it was like to fly in combat. The complete version of '[A Flying Fragment](#)' can be found at the end of *Jack's War*.



*Inside a billet at No. 21 Transit Camp, Kasfareet.  
(Photograph supplied by JWreglesworth.)<sup>35</sup>*

### **Wed. 14th Oct. 1942**

Shearman and I were gherrying through Cairo when Shearman uttered an ear-shattering screech and leapt from the gherry. He'd spotted the latest bunch of 3 Squadron replacements in the crowd – five of them – only 3 days off the boat. Alec Willis and John Wells among them. We introduced them to Salvo at the Taverne Francaise over American beer and a luscious steak. Then did over a night club to show them how it's done out here. Laver was breaking a chain into handy lengths for throwing when the M.P.s came in. That boy is certainly opening out.

Yesterday Shearman and I were in a Cairo leather shop bargaining for some desert boots when some Hun planes flew over and off went the sirens. They were so high you could only see the vapour trails. 'Shufti Kites', as recco planes are called here. 'Shufti' is Arabic for 'look at'.

### Friday 16 Oct. 1942

Ron Matthews and Tom Russell have finished their Kitty conversions and are back here waiting till the Squadron needs them.

A tyre burst on Russell's landing but no damage.

Matthews' engine conked one day at 5,000 feet and he dropped his wheels and tried to reach the drome. Cut things pretty fine.

He skimmed over a sand-hill, hit the top of a ridge and bounced a couple of hundred yards onto the drome where the plane rolled to a standstill.

Apart from this they had a good time and did well.

An Australian, Sgt. Downes, was killed force-landing a Hurricane the day they arrived there. He put his wheels down and when he hit the plane turned over. Matthews was a pall-bearer at the funeral. There was a Downes back at EFTS Narromine 12 course but Matthews couldn't tell us if this was the same one.

Judge, the Wing Commander in charge of these conversions, came here to Almaza this morning, called out for the Australians waiting conversion for 3 Squadron and told us he'd whizz us through as fast as he could. The Kittyhawks used for conversions have funk engines – U.S. [unserviceable] half the time – which delays the business. The same engines give the boys plenty of thrills and forced landing practice.

### Sat. 17 Oct. 1942

Wind and sand lasted 24 hours, intermingled believe it or not, with rain.

Tom Russell and Matthews have gone up to the front. Russell to the Squadron and Matthews to a post up there. Charles



*Libya. 1941. Pilots of No. 3 Squadron, RAAF, waiting near the operational 'room' at their Western Desert HQ. (Photo and caption AWM IMG 021806.)<sup>37</sup>*

Gallagher is off for his conversion in the morning. Charles G has tried to get on bombers ever since he joined the Air Force – and seems best fitted for them both temperamentally and by his interest in navigation and kindred matters, but here he is about to come into action with the rest of us on fighters.

The Allies expect to make a push in the desert in about a month, and it looks as though we'll make our debut then. [The expected 'push in the desert' was the 2nd Battle of El Alamein.]

**TOM RUSSELL** is still very involved with No. 3 Squadron and is in touch with the remaining members. His evocative stories about their time in the desert appear on the 3 Squadron website. Tom provided an interesting insight into the structure of squadrons when he explained that, 'Three Squadron had 3 flights, A, B and C.' He flew operations with C flight and 'more or less only knew the men who serviced our aircraft and cooks and stewards.' (Russell, pers. comm. 2013.)

Tom kept his own diary during the war and this is where many of those website stories probably originated. One dramatic 3 Squadron flying operation had a domino effect with far-reaching implications for the German High Command. Tom was flying Kittyhawk fighter bombers in two of four operations with 3 Squadron in Tunisia on 7 April, 1943, when they repeatedly strafed Claus von Stauffenberg's retreating Panzer Division. Stauffenberg's injuries, the 'loss of his left eye, his right hand, and two fingers on his left hand', were probably sustained during 3 Squadron's attacks. At least Tom would like to think so.

During his recovery in a Munich hospital, the ever gallant Stauffenberg joked, 'I never knew what to do with all those fingers when I still had them.' The injuries, however, caused Stauffenberg to be recalled from Africa and landed him a job on Hitler's staff. This in turn led to him famously placing the bomb in the briefcase next to Hitler in an attempt to remove the Nazi Party from power.

Tom Cruise and Sebastian Koch both played the much admired von Stauffenberg in German and English language versions of *Operation Valkyrie*.<sup>38</sup>

Many of the pilots who pepper the pages of Jack's journal appear in the operations list for that fateful 7 April strafing of von Stauffenberg's Division. They include the dedicated and



Above: Tom Cruise as Claus von Stauffenberg.<sup>40</sup>



eloquent Tom Russell; Bobby Gibbes the baby-faced commander; Ian Roediger; Pete Gilbert; the duo of Arthur Dawkins and Ron Matthews; Jack Doyle; Geo Hardiman; Reg Stevens, Harbour 'K'; Bob Dent; Brian Eaton; Caldwell; and Reg Laver (possibly not the Laver of the 'Taverne Francaise' fracas).<sup>39</sup>

### Mon. 19 Oct. 1942

Several of us got mail from Australia to-day. Mick Shearman has had none since he left home and is very disappointed. He's gone off now to cable home a complaint and intends to drink himself to sleep to-night.

I had one from Lew Trunley's father. He'd just won a couple of thousand pounds but didn't seem very jubilant. He'd assumed I didn't hear of Lew's death and told me about it.

### 21 Oct. 1942

Ted Hawke, Geo Hardiman, Murray Knox and Joe Weatherburn arrived up from O.T.W. [Operation Training

*Jack and Lew Trunley flying Tiger Moths in formation over Camden. Jack has inscribed on the back of the photograph, 'Lew died in the Battle of Britain'. This happened in 1942 when Lew was in England flying with No. 64 Squadron. He was formation flying a Spitfire in cloud when his aircraft crashed into the sea at Kent – 200 yards offshore.<sup>42</sup>*



*Hitler and Mussolini survey the bomb damage.<sup>41</sup>*



Wing] in Sudan. They have done 60 hours in Harvards, Hurricanes and Tomahawks and must be about O.K. for ops.

Dick Howie and Ian Roediger are back from Kitty conversion at El Ballah. They're also waiting for their posting to the front.

I heard Sandy Jones has done 8 hours ops – he had an ME109 on his tail once but out-turned him and got out of trouble.

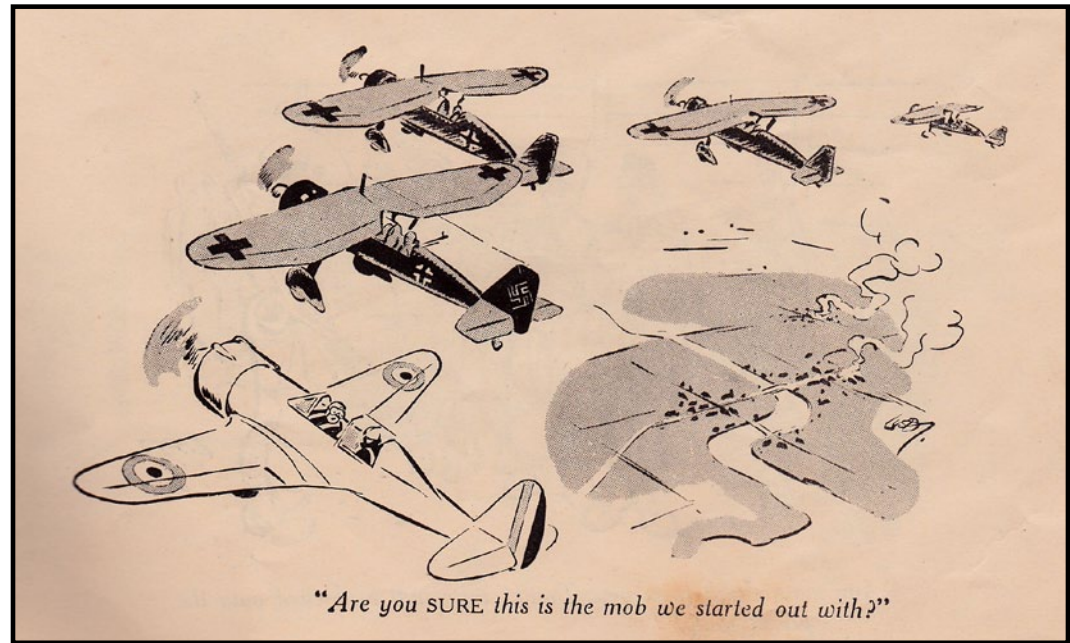
### 25 Oct. 1942

Pete Gilbert and Robert Ulrich go to El Ballah at 5.30 am tomorrow. Dick Howie and Ian Roediger have gone up to the Squadron. Tom Russell who left for the Squadron a week ago never got there and no-one knows where he is.

The allies have started a big push again so things should hum out here for a while.

This morning I saw a Hun Ju88 [a Junkers 88 bomber] being escorted back by two Kittyhawks. Looked as though it had been caught intact up in the Blue [the desert] somewhere.

Last night I met Jim Olaf and John Locke who trained back at Wagga. They've been in England on Spits. Olaf lived about 100 yds from my place at Coogee before the war.



Cartoon: Thumbs Up! (1941).<sup>43</sup>

THIS IS THE LAST OF JACK'S ENTRIES IN BOOK I.

## Gliding Days – ‘Will she fall apart?’



*‘Self with hat, instructing Tyro McFee. In the RAAF he reached Wirraways, Forest Hill, Wagga Wagga. There he came to grief but not fatally.’ Jack’s inscription is on the back of the photograph – possibly of the glider he built with his brother Maurice (Moss) Lusby.*

## Flying Crews with Wirraways – at Wagga Wagga?



*Jack is third from right, second row (standing).  
(Photograph in Jack’s collection.)*

## End of Book I

[On to Jack’s War BOOK 2](#)

[3 Squadron STORIES](#)

[3 Squadron HOME/Search](#)

## Notes – Book I

1. D Stewart, 'The *Bulletin* as I Knew It', *1977 Boyer Lectures*, The Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, 1977, p. 32.
2. Stewart p.35.
3. J McGowan & T Moore, '458 Squadron Middle East', Map, 458 Squadron, Sydney, n.d.
4. G Silk, 'Western Desert, North Africa – No. 3 Squadron in front of Tomahawks', Image AWM 010897. Retrieved April 28 2013 from: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/010897>
5. A Purcell, 'Something Very Big', *Bradfield Park* (Blog), 2011. Retrieved September 15 2012 from: <http://somethingverybig.wordpress.com/2011/03/12/bradfield-park/>
6. National Archives of Australia, A9300 JV Lusby, 1939-1948. Retrieved October 31 2012 from: <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/Image.asp?B=5254457>
7. T Russell, '3 Squadron and the 'Plot to Kill Hitler'', in J Oglethorpe (ed), '3 Squadron Stories', No. 3 Squadron Website. Retrieved November 11 2012 from: <http://www.3squadron.org.au/subpages/Stauffenberg.htm>
8. National Archives of Australia, I66/24/663, 1945-1960, M Law. Retrieved September 19 2012 from: <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/Image.asp?B=1072317>
9. National Archives of Australia, A705, I66/43/262, 1943-60, RB Wardrobe. Retrieved November 10, 2012 from: <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/Image.asp?B=1082517>
10. National Archives of Australia, I66/24/663, 1945-1960, M Law. Retrieved September 19 2012 from: <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/Image.asp?B=1072317>
11. J Herington, 1954, 'Air War Against Germany and Italy, 1939–1943' in G Long (ed), *Australia in the War of 1939 – 1945*, Series 3 – Air – Volume III, Australian War Memorial, Canberra. 1954.
12. A Stephens, 2001, *The Royal Australian Air Force: A History* 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford University Press, London, 2001, pp. 9-19.



13. AC Green, 'HMIS Hindustan', Photograph, State Library of Victoria collection, 1930-48. Retrieved October 14 2012 from:  
[http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/primo\\_library/libweb/action/search.do?dscnt=0&scp.scps=scope%3A%28SLV\\_VOYAGER%29%2Cscope%3A%28SLV\\_DIGIT\\_OOL%29%2Cscope%3A%28SLVPRIMO%29&frbg=&vl%2817732509UII%29=images&tab=default\\_tab&dstmp=1371127756803&vl%2810247183UI0%29=any&srt=rank&ct=search&mode=Basic&dum=true&tb=t&indx=1&vl%281UIStartWith0%29=contains&vl%28freeText0%29=A+C+Green+Hindustan&fn=search&vid=MAIN](http://search.slv.vic.gov.au/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?dscnt=0&scp.scps=scope%3A%28SLV_VOYAGER%29%2Cscope%3A%28SLV_DIGIT_OOL%29%2Cscope%3A%28SLVPRIMO%29&frbg=&vl%2817732509UII%29=images&tab=default_tab&dstmp=1371127756803&vl%2810247183UI0%29=any&srt=rank&ct=search&mode=Basic&dum=true&tb=t&indx=1&vl%281UIStartWith0%29=contains&vl%28freeText0%29=A+C+Green+Hindustan&fn=search&vid=MAIN)
14. Lankapura Historic Image Collection, 'Colombo Docks 1942', Photograph. Retrieved October 11 2012 from:  
<http://lankapura.com/2012/02/colombo-dock-yard-sri-lanka-1942/>
15. Lankapura Historic Images of Sri Lanka 1903, 'Mount Lavinia Beach Sri Lanka c. 1900s', Photograph, Plâté Ltd, A.W.A. Photographer. Retrieved September 15 2012 from: <http://lankapura.com/2009/05/mount-lavinia-beach-sri-lanka-c1900s/>
16. M Tomlinson, *The Most Dangerous Moment: The Japanese Assault on Ceylon 1942*, London: William Kimber & Co Ltd, 1976.
17. Lankapura Historic Images of Sri Lanka 1903, 'Entrance to the old Dutch Fort at Galle' IMG432. Retrieved October 10, 2012 from:  
<http://lankapura.com/photo-gallery/architectural/fortifications-military/>
18. Nichols, 'An American-built flying boat', 1941, Photograph AWM 009455. Retrieved April 27 2013 from:  
<http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/009455/>
19. Nichols, 'Catalina Flying Boats on patrol', 1941, Photograph AWM 009453. Retrieved April 27 2013 from:  
<http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/009453/>
20. 'Sydney's Welcome to First POWs from Singapore', *Argus*, 17 September 1945, p. 3. Retrieved September 16 2012 from:  
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/965204>
21. JF Somerville, 'Report to British Naval Command', August 19, 1942, Item no. 78, transcribed by D. Kindell. Retrieved June 5 2012 from:  
<http://www.naval-history.net/xDKWD-EFI942-Introduction.htm>
22. National Archives of Australia. PD Gilbert A9300, 1946-1957. Retrieved October 8 2012 from:  
<http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/Imagine.asp?B=5381761>
23. National Archives of Australia, RB Wardrobe A705, 166/43/262, 1943-60. Retrieved November 10, 2012 from:  
<http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/Imagine.asp?B=1082517>

24. National Archives of Australia, DA Shearman, A9301, 411394, 1939-1948. Retrieved October 31 2012 from: <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/Image.asp?B=5523921>
25. National Archives of Australia, RL Matthews, A9300, 1939-1948. Retrieved November 11 2012 from: <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/Image.asp?B=5258684>
26. National Archives of Australia, PD Gilbert A9300, 1946-1957. Retrieved October 8 2012 from: <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/Image.asp?B=5381761>
27. National Archives of Australia, RL Matthews, A9300, 1939-1948. Retrieved November 11 2012 from: <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/Image.asp?B=5258684>
28. National Archives of Australia, AWG Dawkins, A12372, R/4977/8, 1940-1984. Retrieved October 8 2012 from: <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/Image.asp?B=5381761>
29. J Oglethorpe (ed), n.d., 'Sergeant "Tiny" Cameron and his pal "Buzz" - 1941', Number 3 Squadron Website. Retrieved April 27 2013 from: <http://www.3squadron.org.au/subpages/buzz.htm>
30. J Lusby, Cartoons, *Grin*, F Johnson (ed), Frank Johnson, Sydney, 1945.
31. Lankapura Historic Images of Sri Lanka 1944, 'Elephant tows a fighter aircraft at airfield near Kalpitiya', IMG253. Retrieved October 10, 2012 from: <http://lankapura.com/2009/03/an-elephant-towing-a-fighter-aircraft-at-airfield-near-kalpitiya>
32. J Lusby, Cartoons *Thumbs Up*, Stories F Johnson, F Johnson (ed), Frank Johnson, Sydney, 1941.
33. R Quixley, 'Sinking of the Troopship SS Oronsay', WW2 People's War Homepage, BBC website, 2003. Retrieved November 18 2012 from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/22/a1280422.shtml>
34. G Silk, 'Western Desert Sand Storm', Image AWM 010203, 1941. Retrieved April 27 2012 from: <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/010203/>
35. J Lusby, 'A Flying Fragment', *Stories from the Second World War*, D Davin (ed.), Oxford University Press, London, 1982.
36. J Wreglesworth, n.d., 'Inside a billet at Kasfareet', Photograph in Delta, C (ed), Service in the Suez Canal Zone website. Retrieved 29 April 2013 from: <http://www.suezcanalzone.com/pics15.html>

37. Australian War Memorial, 'Pilots of no. 3 Squadron, RAAF, waiting near the operational room', Photograph, 021806, 1941. Retrieved 20 June, 2012 from: <http://www.awm.gov.au/search/collections/?q=IMG+021806&conflict=second+world+war%2C+1939-1945&submit=Search>
38. T Russell, '3 Squadron and the 'Plot to Kill Hitler' in J Oglethorpe (ed) '3 Squadron Stories', No. 3 Squadron Website. Retrieved November 11 2012 from: <http://www.3squadron.org.au/subpages/Stauffenberg.htm>
39. J Oglethorpe (ed), No. 3 Squadron Operations Record Book p. 218, in T Russell 'The Plot to Kill Hitler', No. 3 Squadron Website. Retrieved December 9 2012 from <http://www.3squadron.org.au/subpages/Stauffenberg.htm>
40. J Oglethorpe (ed), 'Tom Cruise as Lieutenant Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg in *Valkyrie*', Photograph in T Russell 'The Plot to Kill Hitler', No. 3 Squadron Website. Retrieved December 9 2012 from <http://www.3squadron.org.au/subpages/Stauffenberg.htm>
41. J Oglethorpe (ed), 'Mussolini and Hitler Survey the Damage from the Bomb', Photograph in T Russell 'The Plot to Kill Hitler', No. 3 Squadron Website. Retrieved December 9 2012 from <http://www.3squadron.org.au/subpages/Stauffenberg.htm>
42. National Archives of Australia, L Trunley, A9301, 403610, 1939-1948. Retrieved October 9 2012 from: <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/Imagine.asp?B=5522660>
43. J Lusby, Cartoons *Thumbs Up*, Stories by F Johnson, F Johnson (ed), Frank Johnson, Sydney, 1941, p.21.
44. P Dunn, 'Narromine Airfield, Narromine, NSW, During WW2', Australia @ War, 2007. Retrieved March 6 2012 from: <http://www.ozatwar.com/airfields/narromineairfield.htm>
45. 'An Air Force for an Empire', World War II, RAAF Museum, 2010. Retrieved March 7 2012 from: <http://www.airforce.gov.au/raafmuseum/exhibitions/heritage.htm>
46. J Lusby, Cartoons *Thumbs Up*, Stories by F Johnson, F Johnson (ed), Frank Johnson, Sydney, 1941, p.40.
47. Lankapura Historic Images of Sri Lanka 1944, 'Sri Lankan stall holder with apprentice'. Retrieved October 11, 2012 from: <http://lankapura.com/2008/09/typical-road-scene-native-hut-ceylon/>
50. J Perka, (photographer), 'Kittyhawk crashed in Western Desert, 1942', Vintage Wings Canada, 2012. Retrieved February 24 2014 from <http://www.vintagewings.ca/VintageNews/Stories/tabid/116/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/357/language/en-CA/Original-Kittyhawk-HS-B-Discovered.aspx>