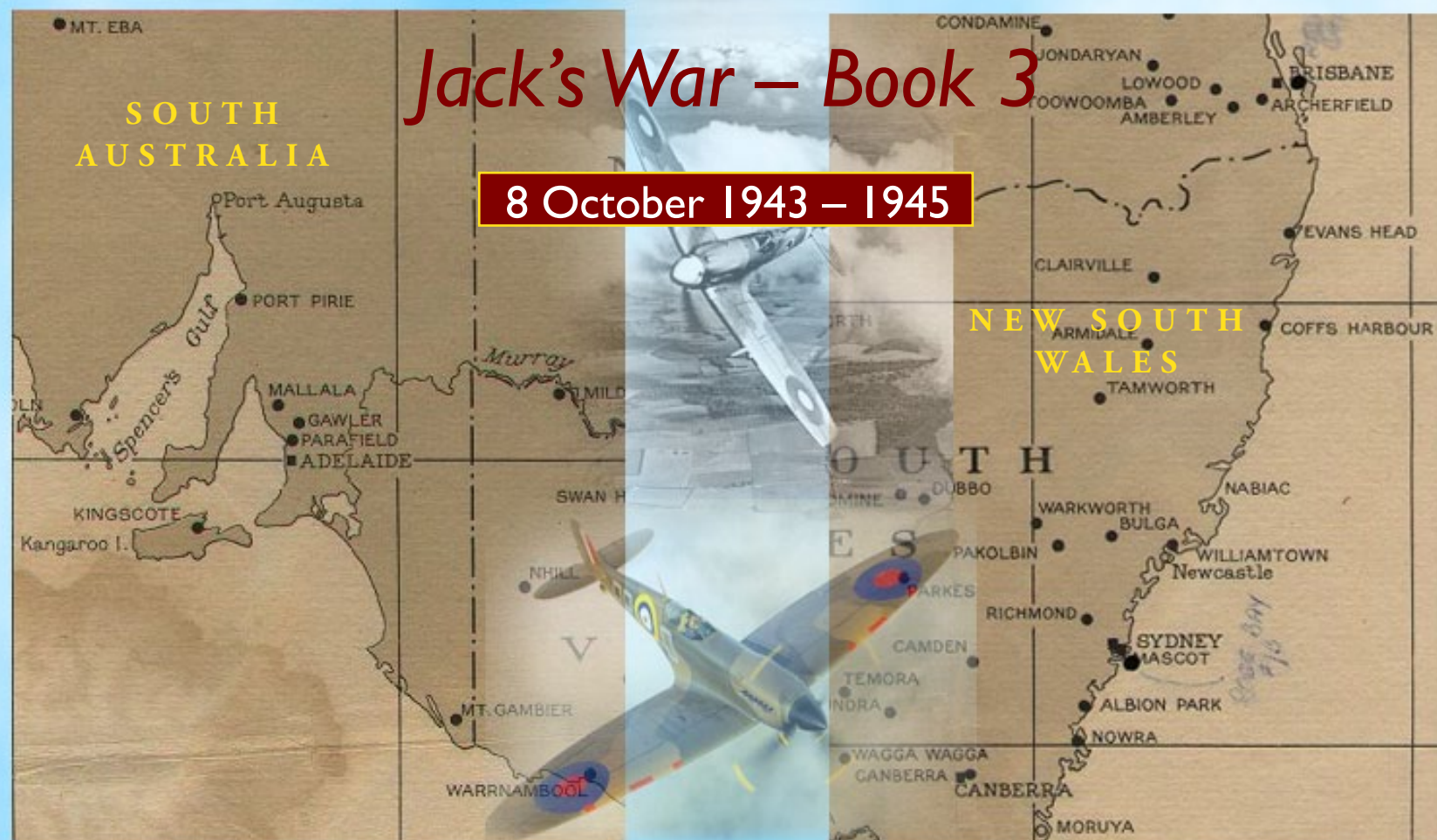


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[3 Squadron STORIES](#)

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Maps of South Australia and New South Wales showing RAAF bases.

In SA, Port Pirie – home of No. 2 Bombing and Gunnery School – Adelaide, Spencer's Gulf and the Murray River are marked. Broken Hill, not visible, is near the NSW border. The NSW map includes Sydney, Richmond, Parkes, Evans Head and Wagga Wagga. Brisbane, Archerfield and Amberley are over the border in Qld.³³ Spitfire aircraft above³⁴ and top³⁵.

Map: Peter Dunn's "Australia @ War" website www.ozatwar.com

Friday 8 Oct. 1943 [No. 2 Bombing and Gunnery School, Port Pirie]

Shaky-do for one Evans to-day. His kite was on fire in the air so he belly-landed 18 miles S.E. of the drome and got out just as the lot went up with a loud explosive, 'whoof!'.

Had an Airgraph letter from Arthur Dawkins 3 Squadron. Written in Sicily. He expects to come back Xmas-ish.

22 Oct. 1943

Squadron Ldr Strickland had to go to Mildura on account of an Inquiry. I flew him across in a 'Battle'. It was Tiger country most of the way. Mildura's a fighter O.T.U. [Operational Training Unit] so when approaching it I stuck the nose down and got plenty of speed on the clock in case some of the boys 'jumped' us.

I met Dave Ritchie, Garth Clabburn, Reg Fifer and John Waddy back from the desert. They're having a spell instructing. The WAAAFs turned on a dance at night – so all got molo [military slang for tipsy or possibly dressed up] and attended.

Shea, Tapsell and Holman from Pirie are training on Kitties there. I heard Ron McDonald pulled the wings off a Boomerang and went in. Frank Piggot was killed in a Kitty.

Holman didn't allow for the nose drop in low level strafing and nearly went in.

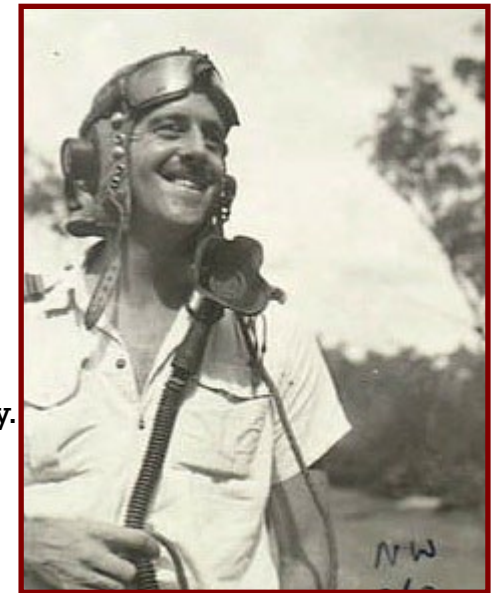
An unpopular Group Capt. is now C.O. in Mildura. C.F.I. [Chief Flying Instructor] Killer Caldwell celebrated his D.S.O. [Distinguished Service Order] by shouting the mess.

The unpopular Group Captain who doesn't drink or smoke, said, 'Are you aware, Caldwell, that there is an A130 prohibiting "treating" in the mess?'

Caldwell turned to the Grouper, who has a smallish mo, and said, 'Are you aware, Sir, that there is an A130 prohibiting the trimming of moustaches in the Air Force?' and resumed drinking.

We flew back to Pirie this afternoon. We'll be returning to Melbourne on Monday.

I had a wire from home congratulating me on my engagement.



Clive 'Killer' Caldwell sporting his own generous 'mo'! Photo taken in April 1943 shortly after his return from the Middle East.³⁸

24 Oct. 1943

Lance Newbound, Smoky Gray, and Long turned on a show last night which resulted in the C.O. placing them under close arrest and parading them before A.O.C. [Air Officer Commanding.]

The A.O.C. is a Canadian who took a reasonable enough view and placed them on the 'dry' for a month.

The end of the 'retreat' is marked on a calendar – very prominently with a red circle.

26 Oct. 1943

To Mildura again yesterday. I dove on the drome with maximum velocity in case I was playfully jumped. There was a 'Whirl of Death' over the drome. 8 kites circling to land. I joined in at about No. 5 position, kept everything forward and hoped the Kitty astern wouldn't catch up. Came in at 110 [mph] – quite a sensation in a Battle, and reached the far end 50 yards ahead of the bloke behind who turned out to be Doug Tapsell.

The Wirra took off this morning and got no higher – three times it sank out of sight behind trees only to stagger up a few feet and clear the next belt of timber. The mob on the tarmac were chanting, 'He's up! He's down! He's up! He's down!'

Finally it went in downwind two miles east and stayed down.

Conversation between C.F.I [Chief Flying Instructor] and the duty pilot:–

'Any smoke?'

'No.'

'Any cloud of dust?'

'No.'

'Oh – he's probably O.K. Don't bother sending the fire tender. Tell the ambulance to pick up a photographer and get across and have a look.'

Later Stricko said, 'Let's get to Hell out of here before I'm on another Court of Inquiry.'

Just before we left for Parafield [Adelaide] Dave Ritchie and some others took a gaggle of Kitties, Spits and Wirras across to beat up Adelaide – War Loan Rally 'bull'.

We ate up Parafield and came on home.



Australian Second World War poster depicting soldiers in action with aircraft bombing vessels in background. The poster appeals for people to buy bonds in the third victory loan.⁴⁰

THE WAR Loan Rally Jack mentions was the War Loans Scheme administered by the Commonwealth War Loan Office. The scheme encouraged Australians to buy war bonds which would mature with interest after the war. War loan drives became a part of life, with people regularly being asked to 'dig deep' to help fund the war effort. A total of 12 major Government war loans would be offered to the Australian public during the Second World War.⁴¹ (War Loan was also known as Liberty Loan and, from 1944, heralding Allied optimism, it was known as Victory Loan.)

Monday 1 Nov. 1943 [No. 2BAGS Port Pirie]

I got an Airgraph letter from Alex Macdonald, 3 Squadron. They were all drinking buckshee beer in an appropriated house in Sicily in Italy when he wrote it. A hilarious effort only intelligible in patches.

SLIM MOORE of 3 Squadron gives a more coherent account of the 'buckshee' alcohol famously liberated in Sicily than Alex Macdonald's 'hilarious effort' at telling it. The event ended memorably with the airmen of No. 450 Squadron blowing up Agnone Railway Station.

Slim was present when the first Italian civilians came around with bottles of beer for sale, at the newly-occupied Agnone airstrip in Sicily.

AS SLIM tells it, things began well:

It was good-quality Bavarian pre-war beer - and there was plenty more where that came from! The Australian squadrons quickly purchased the whole supply, which had apparently been left in a large barn by the departing Germans.

'The Padre's 15cwt. truck was used to bring it in. The 3 Squadron boys were able to share out the beer to everyone's satisfaction, but apparently things did not go so smoothly in [the RAAF'S] nearby 450 Squadron, and a sizable quantity of the valuable bottles were locked away in Agnone Railway Station, "for 450 Pilots' use only"...'³

Obviously it was not for the aircrewmembers (known as Erks)!

JACK DOYLE (later C.O. of 450 Squadron) describes how events at Agnone went from jubilant to gelignite:

'The Group Captain, Eaton, whom I admire greatly - he was a real all rounder - he sent me to take over 450, 'cause he reckoned I could handle them.

'There was nothing wrong with 450 except perhaps that they had blown up the Officers' Mess in Sicily with gelignite ...

'Unfair distribution of alcohol ... obviously the airmen didn't get as much as they thought they should have. They'd be right too. Fair enough. When the tents were searched the next day, every tent had a stick of gelignite in it so it was rather difficult to pin it on anyone.

...There are photos here in 450 [Squadron history log] books, [that tell] a before-and-after. There's a photo of a beer advertisement and then the after is Agnone Railway station demolished ...'⁴

Members of No. 450 Squadron were known as the Desert Harassers.

The Padre's Truck



This is the Padre's truck used to transport the beer! Italy. c. 1943. Padre J. F. (Fred) McKay of Qld, one of the RAAF padres in the Mediterranean theatre of war, outside his RAAF truck. His driver is Corporal Les Mitten of Kurri Kurri, NSW. Padre McKay previously worked with the Australian Inland Mission. He'd succeeded Father Flynn.¹

Tues. 2 Nov. 1943 [Port Pirie]

There was a cloudburst this afternoon with an 80 mph breeze. Water came down in floods. Five ton aircraft were blown all over the drome, dragging 5 cwt of concrete parking blocks. Eight of 'A' Flight's machines were damaged. The Hospital was partially demolished. Visibility was almost nil. I had a glimpse at one stage of a 'Battle' sliding backwards at a good speed with 20 or so men clinging to it.

Smoky twisted his cap back to front and scuttled out into the elements to hold one kite down. Smoky is about 5 feet nothing, so the effort was ineffective. He gave up the fight and sat huddled on the tailplane seeking slight protection behind the rudder as the machine slid away out of view into the soup.

It was the worst storm I've seen. A hail of debris went hurtling horizontally through the air.

7 Nov. 1943

Squadron Leader Dick Creswell and Flying Officer Leaming beat up the drome this afternoon with two Kitties. A thorough job. Dove head-on into the parade ground – beat up the tarmac at an altitude of about ten feet. Did split arcs and steep turns round the tennis courts. Quite a show.

I took Jan Shaw up in a Ryan this morning and brushed up my aerobatics. Had her [the plane!] trimmed nose heavy to fly upside down and reefed her into a dive like that. Did she whistle! 6,000 to 1,000 in no time. It's a wonder the little bastard held together.



Port Pirie, South Australia, RAAF No 3 Air Observer School. Aircraft, hangars and barracks during a severe dust storm. (Photograph:AWM P00296.007.)³⁶

12 days' leave over in Sydney from Friday. Wackydoo!

We told Pete Calford to go and get a brand new kite from the hangar and try it out. Pete's eyes glistened and sparks flew from his moostache.

It was actually a clapped out relic merely re-camouflaged probably to hold it together. It blew oil all over him on take-off and he flew round and landed more or less blinded.

Friday 26 Nov. 1943

Back to-day from Sydney. I picked Sheila up at Broken Hill and whizzed her across to meet the family.

One P/O landed here with a 20lb bomb hung up. He told the ground crew to look for the bomb and opened the bomb doors. The bomb fell to the ground and exploded. An armourer and rigger were riddled but still alive. The petrol tank and every square foot of the plane were holed like a sieve.

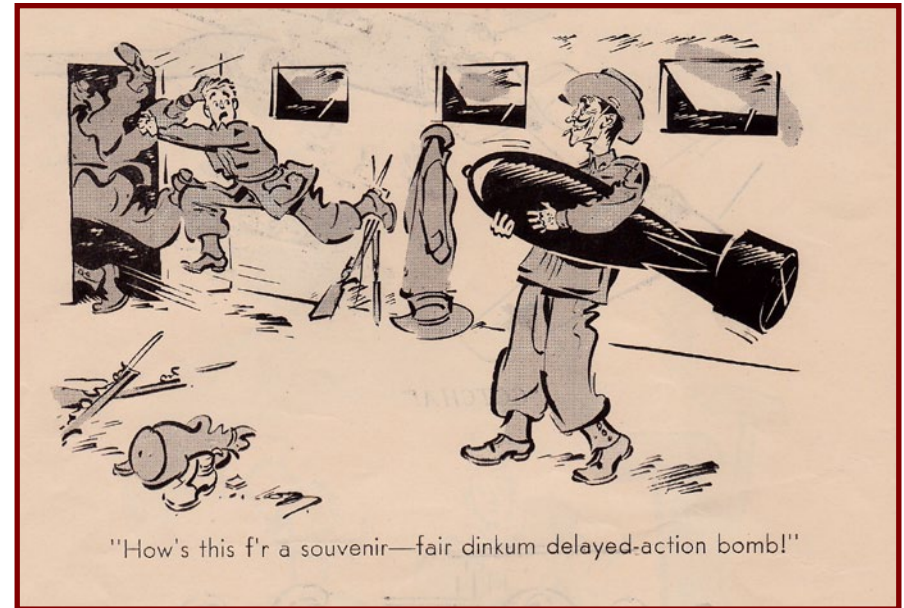
Earl was unhurt and rocketed out. The plane blew up almost immediately.

28 Nov. 1943

I flew to Adelaide for the weekend. Just as well I had the plane – a railway strike kept everyone else in Pirie. They all got drunk. O'Connor is still on his bed – face and hands raw meat. He got into strife in the town.

Received a letter - from Geoff Mitchell – he's awaiting court martial for pranging a Wirra – and one from Les Such.

Also one from Alex Mac now in Italy.



Cartoon: Thumbs Up (1941).²

ALEX MACDONALD was a pilot flying in the operation to bomb the hydro-electric dam power station on the Pescara River in Italy on the 5th May 1944. While Flt Lt Richards scored a direct hit on the dam's sluice gate, Alex dropped a bomb on a red-roofed building on the north bank.⁸

THE PESCARA Dam was considered an important target because it was believed that the German Army intended to open its sluice gates which would flood the valley down river and hold up the allied ground forces in their advance towards Rome. There were 36 fighter-bomber planes in the dam busting operation. Kittyhawks were flown by the RAAF's No. 3 Squadron and by South Africa's SAAF No. 5 Squadron, while the RAF's No. 260 Squadron flew Mustangs.⁹ The 12 Kittyhawks from No. 3 Squadron were led by the same Rex Bayly whom Jack described being scooped out of the Western Desert by Bobby Gibbes during the dramatic rescue in 1942.



LES SUCH was the artist with whom Jack had shared a very lively art studio just off the lower end of George Street, Sydney, before the war. During the war Les served in the AIF. At left is one of his cartoons published as a poster in 1940 to attract donations for the war effort. (Poster image courtesy Josef Lebovic Gallery, Kensington, NSW.⁴⁴)



Alex MacDonald and other pilots returning from a dam-busting exploit at Pescara, Italy.

Left to right: Captain H. Odendaal of Free State, South Africa; Lieutenant W. J. Lombard of Johannesburg; Flying Officer B. Page of NSW; Flt Lt L. S. Sheppard of Newport, Monmouthshire; Warrant Officer **A. Macdonald** of Sydney NSW (second from right); Pilot Officer D. Short of SA.⁵

Wed. 8 Dec. 1943 – Additional obituaries

Nev Austin

Geo. Hocking

Bunny Anderson

Don Vinness

Johns

Scott

Jacky Beer

Smoky Dawson

Bob Wardrobe

Mick Shearman

Doc McLeod

Wed. 8 Dec. 1943

I had a letter from Phil Hamilton-Foster – he's with 23 Squadron dive bombers in New Guinea.

I flew to Adelaide for the weekend. Arrived back in Pirie to-day. Was informed I've been posted to Test and Ferry flight at Bankstown, Sydney. I have to report there on Monday 20th. Lance Newbound has already gone over – same job.

PHIL HAMILTON-FOSTER survived the war. He had the good fortune to have arrived in New Guinea in 1943 after the high drama of the Battle of Rabaul which was fought the previous year. John Lerew the Commanding Officer of No. 24 Squadron had arrived in Rabaul with the Squadron in December 1941. On 20 January 1942 the Japanese, fresh from their triumph at Pearl Harbour, converged on New Guinea with more than 100 highly effective Mitsubishi Zero aircraft. Led by Lerew, the Squadron's eight trainer Wirraways lumbered skyward to do battle with the Zeros with the inevitable result. An Australian soldier on the ground recalled, 'We sat at our guns shocked by the massacre we had just observed.'¹⁰

When Lerew signalled Australian Headquarters that he was about to evacuate he was told to stay put and fight on – with his one antiquated Hudson bomber pitted against the entire Japanese Pacific airforce.

Lerew then sent his famous cable to HQ in Melbourne containing the gladiator's words: 'Morituri vos salutamus' – We who are about to die salute you!

Against orders to leave his men with the Infantry in Rabaul, Lerew evacuated the whole Squadron. Some were flown out in the Hudson; and the rest escaped by trekking through jungle and across rivers until they could be rescued by the flying boats he'd organised to meet them. The whole evacuation was carried out with the loss of only three men to the Japanese. Lerew then returned to Port Moresby to lead three Hudsons in attacks on Japanese shipping. With his plane on fire, Lerew continued his attack until he was forced to bail out. Unfortunately three of his crew members remained trapped in the burning plane.¹²

The Infantry forces were left in Rabaul to the ensuing debacle and defeat. Lives were lost and 1,000 soldiers were taken prisoner in the chaos of an 'every man for himself' retreat into the jungles and highlands. Only the RAAF air crews, thanks to Lerew's disregard for orders, were saved.

In a further tragedy, all the prisoners (excepting a few officers who had been separately transported), died a few months later, on 1 July 1942, when their Japanese POW transport ship, the *Montevideo Maru* was sunk by the US Navy submarine, *Sturgeon*, off the Philippines.

There is an oddly coincidental postscript to the story. After the war John Lerew was attending a conference in Tokyo where he happened to come across the former Japanese pilot, whose plane he had damaged.

'He was the bravest enemy I ever faced,' the Japanese ex-pilot said.¹³

History tells us that John Lerew was courageous and intelligent and, according to his colleagues, good at a party.¹⁴

Drawing of Wing Commander John Lerew.
Artist: Dennis Adams 1943.⁶



Japanese fleet gathered at Truk, 1942.⁷

ANOTHER INTRIGUING story arises from Jack's 'Additional Obituaries'. Information about what happened to Doc McLeod following his capture by the Germans was provided by Ian Stevenson to James Oglethorpe, editor of the No. 3 Squadron website.

The story below appears on the No. 3 Squadron website.

QUITE A lot of research has recently been carried out into the strange fate of Doc by Ian Stevenson, an aviation-history enthusiast living in France. It turns out that Doc must have been captured by German paratroopers in Sicily, because they evacuated him to their base at Istres in France (today the Marseilles International Airport). The Germans flew him on one of their Ju 52 transports which were flying daring night-time missions out of the German defensive pocket in Sicily. Then, having been put to work on the Istres air base with other slave-labourers of many nationalities, poor Doc was caught in a massive American bombing raid there and died of his wounds three weeks afterwards in Avignon Hospital in September 1943. He was aged 22.

The Germans buried him in Avignon, but became peeved with the vast quantities of flowers being left on Doc's grave by the local French population. Before dawn on the following morning the Germans dug up poor Doc and moved him 35km away to Arles under cover of darkness. In Arles he was unfortunately mis-identified as "American", so once the Americans landed he was dug up again and moved to an American war cemetery near Marseilles! 'Finally, in 1947, the Australian authorities pieced together what had happened. Doc was dug up one final time and moved to his permanent resting place in a beautiful lilac-fringed Commonwealth cemetery at Mazargues, near Marseilles. Even then the wrong date was carved on his headstone. It seems Doc was restless in death but at least his grieving mother, who'd been given confusing information by Australian bureaucrats for years, had some peace.¹⁵

14 Dec. 1943

I'm leaving to-morrow for a few days and will be in Adelaide en-route. There's a large scale party scheduled in the mess to-night.

Sydney 20th Dec. 1943 [Bankstown Airbase NSW]

I got married in Adelaide Saturday last [18 December]. I was still there this morning. Then I jumped a transport plane to Melbourne and another to Sydney – home for lunch.

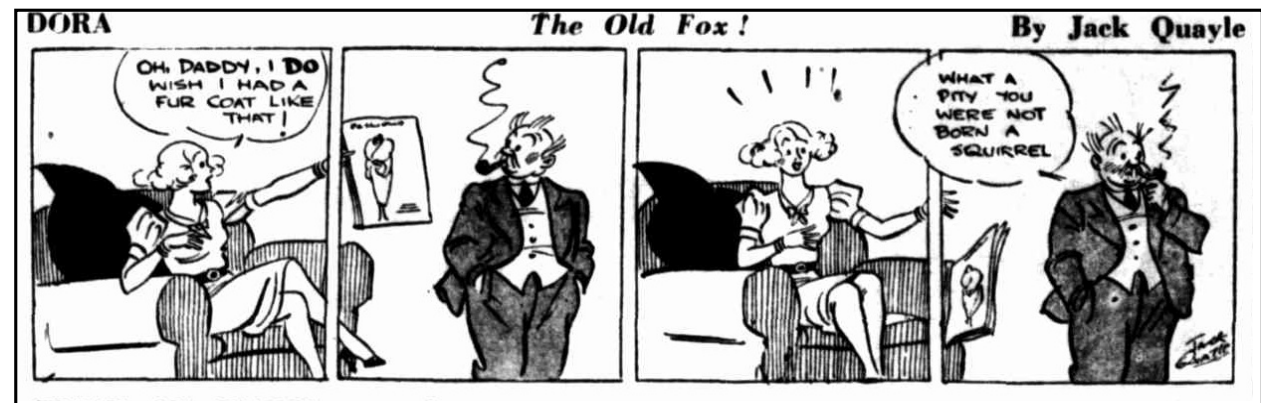
Sheila's following later.

There was no time for elaborate wedding plans, but it went off very nicely. Fizzo party in Jack Quayle's pub afterwards – Quayle was in great form and the Airforce was in attendance in the persons of Pete Catford and Speed Williams.



Jack and Sheila, newly married, in Sydney.

JACK QUAYLE was an Australian cartoonist and one of the founding members of the Australian Black and White Artists' Club in 1924. He created 'Connie', Sydney's first daily strip, for the *Telegraph's* 'Pictorial'. For twelve years Jack Quayle was a political cartoonist with the *Adelaide News*, where he also created the comic strips 'Dora' and 'Perce the Punter'.¹⁷ The Jacks, Quayle and Lusby, retained a lifelong friendship.



Comic strip by Jack Quayle published in The Argus, Melbourne 10/6/1938.¹⁶

22 Dec. 1943 [Bankstown Airbase NSW]

Wilbur Wackett took me as 2nd pilot in a Beaufort to Tamworth. It's a tiny drome there – we just got in and just got out again. Picked up Frank Martin – another old training mate – and brought him back.

My first flip in a Beaufort – not impressed.

24. Dec. 1943 Xmas Eve.

I met Newbound – he's effected a reunion with Ron Vance – now of 82 Squadron, stationed here – and Kevin Long, the dental officer from Pirie, who's also in Sydney. Shaky outlook!

Dave Thompson and Killalee went in at Coff's Harbour ferrying a D.H. Dragon to Townsville. They hit telegraph wires taking off. Killalee was killed.

And two 82 Squadron Kittyhawks hit head-on over the drome here to-day. We ran out of the crew room and there were two columns of black smoke rising from the scrub at the south end of the drome about 400 feet apart.

Both killed. A nice Xmas Eve.

I had to deliver a Tiger Moth to Richmond this afternoon – hadn't flown one for over two years but was slightly tanked at that stage so had no trouble at all. F/L Stewart flew the Norseman over to bring me back. Earlier in the day Stewart was flying a glider being towed by a Spit. Something got tangled and both nearly had it.

Apart from 82 Squadron there's a Yank Cobra Squadron here [Bankstown. The Cobra was a P-39 Airacobra]. It's a free and easy drome. Beat-ups are the order of the day.

There is a break in the journal until it resumes in April 1944.

THIS FAMILY snapshot taken during the war heightens the photographic effect of a moment frozen in time. It's early 1944. The Allies are winning the war in Europe and the defeat of the Japanese in the Pacific is underway. Wartime fears would have been easing and there is a promise of life returning to normal.

The smiling faces of the Lusby, Fitzhenry & Pidcock clan, seen here in the garden at Roseville, imbue the occasion with a sense of optimism. The celebration was probably the wedding of Jack's sister, Judith, to Aubrey Follett. Jude, in Naval uniform with white collar, and Aub (AIF uniform with white belt) are kneeling centre front, arms entwined.

Sheila, with her dark hair piled up, is standing behind and slightly to the right of the kneeling Aubrey. She's gazing fondly at the couple. Sheila is 19 years old and newly married to Jack who's clever, witty, fun, and successful. What could possibly go wrong!

Jack is far right in RAAF uniform looking towards the camera. He too looks happy. Kneeling in front of him is his sister Gwen in her AIF uniform. As Major Lusby, Gwen is now the Medical Officer in charge of Concord Military Hospital. Jack's mother, Caroline, is standing to the left of Sheila and the top of his father's head can just be seen behind her.

Elizabeth, the youngest, is kneeling third from the left. Lizzie is about to enter the Dominican Order as a nun, where in time she is to become prioress of Santa Sabina Convent, Sydney. Missing from the photo is brother, Maurice (Moss) Lusby, who is possibly overseas. A radio-wave physicist, he'd worked in the USA with Robert J. Oppenheimer (the atomic bomb scientist). Also missing is the youngest brother, Robert Lusby.

They don't know at this stage that Robert has died while a prisoner of war working on the infamous Thai/Burma Railway. Their lack of knowledge about his death is despite Caroline making numerous representations to the government for information as to her son's whereabouts. At the end of the war Gwen met every batch of ex-POWs arriving at Concord Hospital, hoping to find Robert among them.

Just another family dealing with war.

A Wedding in the Garden – 1944.



The wedding party in the garden – 19 February, 1944. Jack is far right.

Jack resumes his diary in April, 1944.

12 April 1944 [Bankstown Airbase, NSW]

There were three forced landings today testing Kitties. One had me still pumping down the wheels at 20 feet off the strip. It has a belly [fuel] tank too.

19 April 1944

As we test the Spits we hand them to the Englishmen of 548 and 549 Squadrons or to Strathpine strip [Qld]. Today Squadron Leader Wright of 548 and one of his sergeants collided in mid-air and everything blew up.

I flew 3 Kitties and one Spit VIII to-day. Everything went well for a change. A Ventura landed to-night disgorging ferry pilots including John Lanagan and Robin Norwood again.



The beautiful Spitfire Mark VIII. This particular aeroplane, A58-303, was delivered in October 1943 and later used for a programme of high-altitude test flights in Australia. (Photograph and caption supplied by J Oglethorpe.)²⁹

THE SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE was a single seat, high speed, high performance, short range, interceptor aircraft used as a front line fighter during WWII. After the Battle of Britain it became the backbone of the RAF Fighter Command.²⁷

Supermarine Spitfires were assembled and tested at Amberley Air Base, Queensland, from May 1944 when 48 RAF Spitfires of Nos. 548 and 549 Squadrons arrived.

One of two Spitfires in existence in Australia today is painted in the same colours as the aircraft flown by Bobby Gibbes during the War. This one was stored at Bankstown by Sid Marshall, then bought by Colin Pay who took it to Scone and restored it until it flew again in 1985. In 2000 it was bought by David Lowy who donated it to the Temora Aviation Museum in 2002. It was the last aircraft acquired by the RAAF and is painted in the camouflage colours used by aircraft in the defence of Darwin and the Pacific. It still carries Bobby Gibbes' markings and as Bobby did, it just keeps flying, now in airshows and museum displays.²⁸

22 April 1944 [Presumably still at Bankstown]

Every time I rolled the Spit 349 to the right I got a face full of glycol and/or alcohol. The Erks tried everything. At last they found it – a de-icing leak. It was the first time I've been blinded and nearly crashed landing. The doc filled my eyes with various liquids including castor oil which smeared the vision for some hours and made flying difficult.

We now have to take each Spit to at least 35,000 feet before accepting it.

Dave Wheeler and Huggard came thru today – RAF lads and bloody nice types.



Restored Spitfire MkVIII. Its colour scheme is a tribute to Bobby Gibbs – the 'RG' stands for 'Robert Gibbs'.
(Photograph: Temora Aviation Museum.)³⁷

AN 'ERK' was RAF/RAAF slang for aircraft maintainers of all categories. It is believed to have originated from the Cockney pronunciation of Aircraftman as 'Erkraftman', hence 'Erk'. The meaning was in an annotation by K. Glendon to the poem 'Three Cheers for the Man on the Ground' by an unknown British author in the RAAF's newspaper, *Airforce*.¹⁸ Jack lists Erks as ground staff in his glossary.

23 April 1944

Mac and I dogfought with Spits for one and a half hours this morning.

After lunch took off again and ditto – arse-up in line astern low over the drome to great approval of erks etc.

Finally landed – me second. Selected wheels down and bored in behind Mac. Checked for landing – held her off off off off – then chunks of propellor were flying over my head and in on belly. Landing gear had stayed up.

It was my first prang in about 3 years of flying. Very gentle and very little damage.

Monday 3 May 1944

Two 32 Squadron Beauforts collided. All killed. Lancaster is here again with Isaacson and co.

I dived a Kitty yesterday to test its aileron control and float and I have one dud ear as a result – grounded for a day or two. They pick up speed quickly diving – I was doing 450 in no time.

Dogfought a Boomerang with a Spit. Was that Booma doing things! However, the Spit was a bit too hot for him.

Last night I called in at the Sgts' Mess for one drink en-route to a dance. Spent the evening there lapping at double whiskies with beer chasers. Just made it here. [Back to quarters?]

5 May 1944 [Amberley, Qld]

Yesterday morning I took off in an old Anson to fly the Doc to see his son at Kingaroy [Qld]. Gradwell came to 'navigate'.

The Doc was keen on taking over the helm – the kite immediately soared to 10,000 feet and we damn near froze. We trimmed the Doc down again to within sight of terra firma and found we were off our map. We prised him off the wheel and chugged up and down the mainstreet of a backblocks village trying to read the name of the place on a shop sign or something. All we saw was, 'Don't miss the Pittsworth Show next week' on a big sign.

We declined the invitation as Pittsworth was off our map.

We rough checked the compass by flying both ways along the railway and found it was 50 degrees out on that heading. So we aimed east by the sun for the Pacific Ocean – a good landmark.

We all gazed gloomily at the crags passing underneath and at the depressing fuel gauges. Eventually we spotted Mt Lindsay and Mt Warning north of us and carried on with rising spirits and dwindling petrol across the small village of Mallanganee, then Casino, Lismore, and came to earth on the last drop [of fuel] on the coast of NSW at the RAAF drome at Evans Head.

A late-ish lunch, a re-assuring phone call to Amberley, more petrol, and then home James and don't spare the horses; up into Queensland again. We'd done a tour of Western Q'land and NSW rivalling the Lancasters' War Bond wanderings.

And the Doc still hasn't visited his son.



Amberley RAAF Air Base, Qld, with Mt Walker to the South West, 1939-1945.³⁰

I tested three Kitties to-day. All O.K. for a wonder.

A Walrus amphibian blundered in from Darwin. An improbable looking vehicle.

Young Howard Ferguson has turned up as Aerodrome Control Officer. Last I heard of him he'd returned to the base [overseas, probably Milne Bay] as second dickie on a 32 Squadron Hudson to find five Zeros fossicking round the drome looking for something to kill. There was chase-me-Charlie in and out of the only available cloud till the Japs' petrol ran low and they decamped. The Hudson then landed severely ventilated.

DURING WORLD War II the RAAF Base at Evans Head housed the No. 1 Bombing and Gunnery School and the No. 1 Air Observers School. More than 5,500 RAAF personnel trained at Evans Head. At the height of operations it supported four runways. The aerodrome is Heritage-listed.

Jack mentions 'meeting Jack Doyle and young Price' in Cairo in 1942 before moving on to No. 458 Squadron at Shallufa. Jack Doyle, whose yarns appear on the 3 Squadron website, trained at Evans Head. He recalls having to 'invent air combat exercises in obsolete Fairey Battles' with Arthur Collier.²⁰

And about the Walrus amphibian Jack describes blundering in from Darwin – this from the No. 3 Squadron Website:

'The chief designer of this aircraft was Reginald J. Mitchell, the designer of the famous Spitfire and other Supermarine aircraft, including the Schneider Trophy-winning S6B racing floatplane. R. J. Mitchell had started his technical life at age 16 as an apprentice with a locomotive engineering firm. In 1917, aged 22, he joined Vickers Supermarine and at the age of 24 became chief designer.'²¹

One aircraft magazine described it as 'looking like a pregnant duck waddling down the runway ... but if you were one of the 7,000 Allied airmen and sailors rescued in World War 2, you would likely say that the Supermarine Walrus was the most beautiful amphibious biplane ever built'.²²

Remembering Fairey Battles at Evans Head – WWII



Fairey Battle aircraft at Evans Head Aerodrome, 1941.¹⁹

*Left: Evans Head Aerodrome WWII.
(Photograph courtesy Rod Hatcher and Richard Gates of the Evans Head Aerodrome Heritage Group.)*

Model of Fairey Battle (No.1696) at Evans Head with plaque commemorating those who served. The model was built from specifications provided by the South Australian Aviation Museum, whose members rescued the Battle Jack found crashed in the SA.mangroves. (Photograph courtesy R Hatcher of the Evans Head Aerodrome Heritage Group.)



*Left: The war graves cemetery at Evans Head, NSW.
(Photograph: F. Simms, 2012.)*

11 May 1944 [Amberley]

Squadron Leader Jackson from Lowood came to borrow a Kittyhawk to fly to Townsville, on account of his wife has departed thence with an Allied Serviceman. We're waiting for results.

Reg Charlier called in [flying] a Vengeance and took off again for the North.

An Englishman from the Spit Squadron at Strathpine ground-looped a Wirra landing. Screwed off the undercart and slid backwards down the strip with all the prop blades bent out forwards.

Wednesday 12 May 1944 [Amberley]

Charlier is missing. Reports have come in that something is down on a beach south of Mackay.

Boylan and I drove out to a Norseman that landed. Two bods were aboard in shirt sleeves.

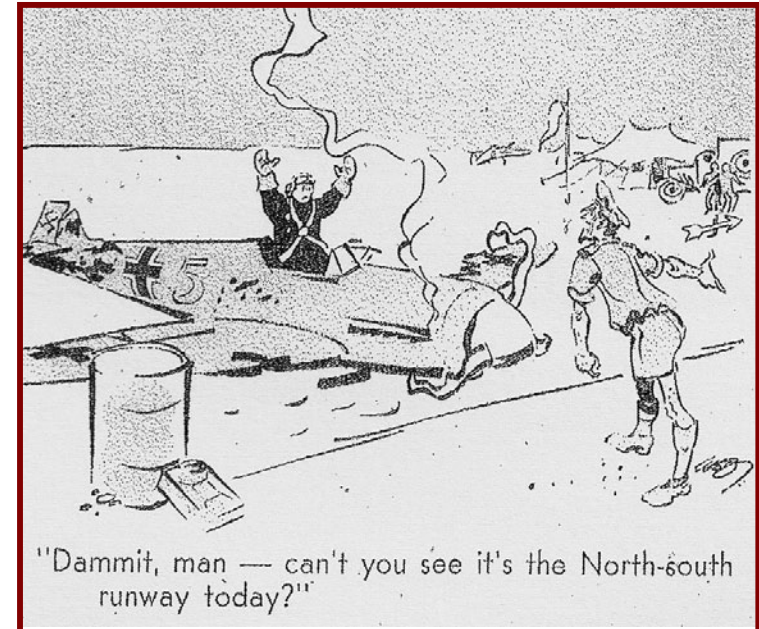
Boylan said, 'See anything above a P/O [Pilot Officer]?'

I said, 'No,' and Boylan was about to drive off when out got a Group Captain and a Wing Commander. Goring and Perrin.

They looked different with their coats on.

Last night we visited the Ack Ack mess nearby. A very wet do. I flew low into their clearing this morning and very few of them had managed to get up and about.

The Kitty I tested today had a distorted tail unit, as we found later. It tried to roll to the right all the time. Above cruising speed I needed both hands on the stick to stay right side up.



Cartoon: Grin With Jack Lusby (1945).²³

Ted Hocking – George's brother – looked in.

Also Pennycinch is in on another ferry flip from Honolulu.

A Mosquito broke up in the air. Boss Walker, and his observation crewman were killed.

APPARENTLY JACK'S 'GEN' WAS 'DUFF'.

Kenneth Boss-Walker survived the war. And James Oglethorpe, editor of the 3 Squadron website, reports Boss's navigator, Jeff Love, is alive today!



This is what happened:

Report BROOME, WA. 1944-06-25. DE HAVILLAND

DH-98 MOSQUITO A52-2 AT BROOME ON RETURN FROM A PHOTOGRAPHIC RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHT OVER SOURABAYA, NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES. THE PORT ENGINE FAILED IN THE TARGET AREA FORCING A RETURN FLIGHT OF NEARLY 1000 MILES ON ONE ENGINE TO THE NEAREST AUSTRALIAN LANDFALL. THE PILOT WAS FLYING OFFICER KENNETH FORD BOSS-WALKER (400076) WITH PILOT OFFICER JEFF LOVE AS NAVIGATOR.²⁴

*The de Havilland Mosquito that was flown, limping on one engine, 1,000 miles across the Indian Ocean by Kenneth Boss-Walker and Jeff Love.²⁵
(Photograph:AWM P00448.075)*

Wednesday 18 May 1944 continued.

Huggy and 3 others bailed with a Beau on fire at night in central Queensland. They were found 3 days later. All O.K.

Thursday 21 September 1944

POP IFOULD went in this afternoon and burned in a Mossie. He stalled and went in 300 yards short of the landing approach.

I had a shaky-do. I landed a Spit sans brake or flap and ran out of drome – bulldozed through scrub, dodging major obstacles and left her turning back towards the drome. No serious damage done.

New entry – no date

THERE WAS a very bright party at home – McDermott, Hawk and Nelson were in great form. Nelson fell for a nice WRAN who came along with Jude. He's arranged to take her out and about this next week or so.

Moss showed. He's moving later to England and U.S.A.

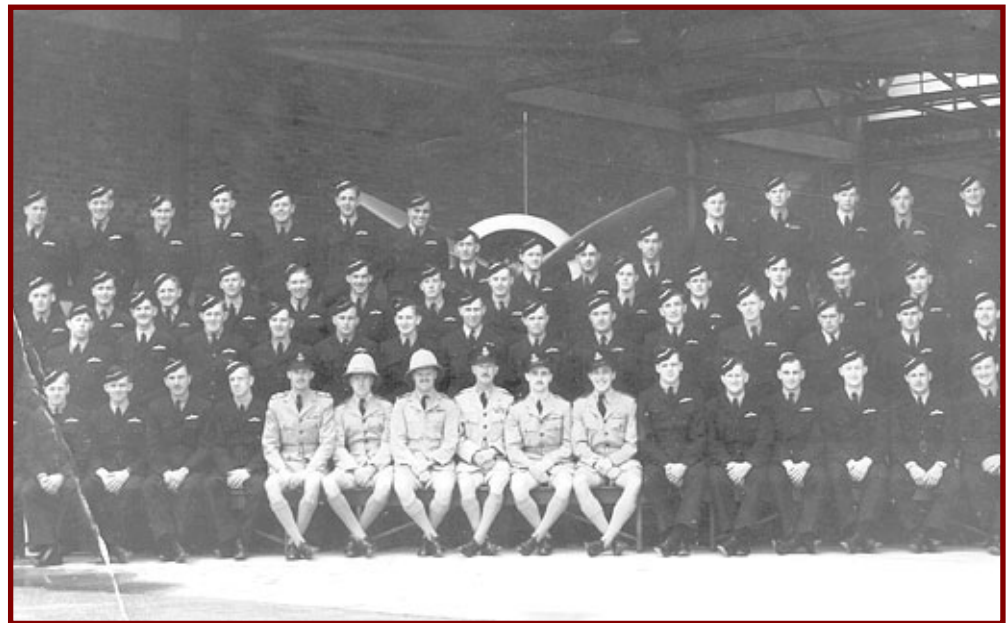
There were ribald interjections from the assembled drinkers.

JACK WAS the eldest of the six siblings and Maurice Lusby, or Moss as he was called, was next in line. Moss would have returned temporarily from the U.S. where he had spent some time as one of three Australian scientists working on Robert J Oppenheimer's atomic project.

Jude, Jack's sister from the photograph of the wedding in the garden, was a WRAN Signaller.

The shaky-do may have been an incident in which Jack found himself leaping out of a largely undamaged plane after a test flight and running as if his life depended on it.

He was given leave. There is a marked deterioration in Jack's handwriting from May 18 to the end of the diary.



*Pilot Training at Port Pirie, South Australia, 1941. Jack is front row, 4th from the left.
(Photograph in Jack's collection.)*

Thurs. 9 November 1944

Nelson Crouch and Dave Clare were killed yesterday. Their Mosquito fell to pieces.

'Slim', the WRAN, waited for Nelson for an hour or so in town and when he didn't turn up she went home and read about it in The Herald this morning.

Dave Clare's wife is expecting a child.

1944 [no day or month given, but probably around 20 December]

Jack Broderick, Flet Shore and the others were burned in a Ventura [Richmond, 20 December 1944]. One WAAAF was among them. 3 English pilots: Biggs, Ashurst, Powell, were killed in a Dragon – Burned. Having a bad run.

I had jammed runaway guns on take off in a P-40 spray Richmond. [Runaway guns is a technical fault where the guns don't stop firing when the trigger is released.]

'44 [Bankstown Airbase]

Out of the 60 who finished Wirra [Wirraway aircraft] training with me at Wagga, now there are only 11 left alive. Ifould and self went in maudlin fashion thru' the tally and made it 12 the morning before he bought it in a Mossie. I used to feel sorry for blokes who were killed. Looking down from the Spitfire VIII at the flicker of flame that was the end of Ifould, from 38,000 feet, I actually felt envy. He'd graduated!

It was probably the mental effect of anoxia. Full emergency oxygen at 38,000 feet is the same as 18,000 feet with none.

I rolled the Spitfire on its back and dived to full throttle off and on over the house so Sheila would know it wasn't me in the crash. [Jack is referring to Pop Ifould's crash in September and he goes on to describe that incident.] The house is beside the drome – inherited from a late test pilot. There was severe buffeting in the dive. At 28,000 feet the indicated speed was 540 mph – that was what actually showed I think – however I wrenched it out well over 600.

The stick rattled violently in my hand. I was afraid to lose ailerons. I held the stick with both hands and when it stopped I gently trimmed out of the dive. Manly pine trees, Sydney Harbour, Rosebery, Mascot, Newington College, all blurred

together. Sinuses clogged. Ears ached.

The said house came tearing towards me at the north side of the drome. I pulled the throttle right back then shoved it forward – must have made a fearful noise at that speed at 50 feet.

I was just thinking, 'I'll be home to dinner, Sheila!'

I pulled back and up to 15,000 [feet] in the speed wash-off, landed and said, 'Who was it this time?'

'Pop Ifould, Sir,' says the engine fitter.

In the mess later the D.C. said, '... Pop's being cremated Saturday. His charming and pregnant wife will be attending. Also his distinguished dad. Some of you chaps come along?'

White said, 'Cremated! In Christ's name, they're going to burn him again?'

Funny how the airforce, after having made sure his wife is pregnant, then kills the father. Very thoughtful of it. The wife has something of her lost mate left with her.

When I got home after the flamboyant dive, Sheila said, 'You didn't have to wake the baby!'

So much for theatrical reassurance.

I think Sheila is whistling in the graveyard. Desert deaths were different. No women. These funerals are distressing – even tragic. Young wives, brave mothers and frustrated sweethearts. Whatever you say to them, their hearts have had it.

At Pop's I felt like saying, 'Dry your eyes – my wife's got it in front of her!'

But a tendency to dramatise is no good in test work. It's likely to get on your test pad. Must stay completely objective. It's possible this bullshit introspection means I'm near the end of my tether. But many blokes have done a hell of a lot more than myself and still seem unaffected. Or do they cover it better? [My] Main fear is the fear of showing it.

Is my increasing recklessness a subconscious thing arising from fear? My own recklessness increases with fatigue. I've done things in the last few days that would stand my hair on end normally. This fatalistic feeling is unfair to Sheila and kid. Must grow up sometime. Me. Or is my present reputation as a test pilot a subconscious compensation for not having

wreaked much havoc on Luftwaffe, and Regia Aeronautica [the German and Italian Airforces].

Too much imagination. A fighter pilot is happier with none. Too much imagination imposes great strains on the man. Too little, great strains on the aircraft. But unlike the man, the aircraft is designed to take it.

Unlike a fighter pilot, a test pilot must have imagination. Nelson Crouch was killed here on a test flight because he had little imagination. Couldn't imagine a Mosquito falling to bits in a dive even tho he'd seen it happen. He dived over the required 450 knots and tried to reef her out like a Kitty. Boonk! His own bullet was in his brain.

Brian Walker looks extrovert but has such a tender touch in fantastic aerobatics he must have a streak of the poet in him, for all his schoolboy bluster. I can tell character now from a man's aerobatics. Walker on the ground pretends to be a clown. In the air no pretence is allowed. There, his clowning is brilliant. Walker will never break a Mosquito through mishandling. He woos them into low loops, one motion upward rolls. Wish I had his touch. I hardly know the bloke except that flying's like handwriting. I'd like to have his future.

Should always woo aeroplanes. Not force them.

'Beer?' says White.

'Why not,' says me.

Why not?

Richmond [1945]

[No date is given but as Jack mentions he's been testing for 18 months, and he began at Bankstown in December 1943 and moved to Richmond Airbase in December 1944, this entry may have been written in 1945.]

I said to White, '[Do you] Feel lonely height-testing Spits?'

He said, 'My bloody oath – die in a minute at 40,000 [feet] if the oxygen cuts out – lonely and frightened when I think about it.'

I said, 'Let's formate up there in the morning – some one to talk to.'

There's something wrong with both of us. Just tired perhaps. I hope.

A test pilot's official [Spitfire testing hours] is 25 hours a month. We've been doing up to 70 hours for the last 18 months.

I've formated up to 42,000 [feet]. In Melbourne University the decompression chamber found I was one of 25% of aircrews unaffected by the bends over 37,000 [feet]. But no-one is unaffected by anoxia.

We [he and White] sculled at around 42,000 feet till both drunk thru anoxia.

On the radio White squeaked, 'Declare it on!'

Your voice rises an octave at that height. The height castrates you but thoughtfully returns your balls on the way down. Like a hat-check girl.

I went down over Wollongong and he went to Newcastle and we turned in head-on attack. Both doing over 400 mph at that height. Closing speed 800. I broke violently to the right when I saw him a speck in ring-sight and went thru his vapour trail!

I sang out, 'Enough, enough!'

And he replied, 'For me too!' He rolled on his back and went down eight miles vertically and wrecked his sinuses – he's grounded now for a couple of weeks.

It's too high for regular work in unpressurised planes.

I'm over-tired and lack-lustre. Landings are going off. Crying on paper.

Doc says in the mess, 'Feeling O.K.?'

And you say, 'Why not? Life's one long holiday!'

Good thing it's a dumb doctor.

Aviation medicine – pregnant WAAAFs and colds-in-the-head. Every doctor should do 1,000 hours violent flying before he puts up his shingle.

My only flying injuries are mental. A doc who knew his stuff would see thru us in a flash.

Amberley [final entry, no date, probably 1945].

HO Grosvenor prides himself on the amount of 'G' he can take. Prided himself, rather. [A retrospective entry because HO Grosvenor died in August 1944.]

3-word obituary: Bloody nice bloke. And the only bloke I've ever seen pull the wings off a P.40. He sure tested it. A P-40's wings ripple at 11 G; and HO removed them, neatly and irrevocably in a pull-out at 1,000 ft. bang over the centre of the drome.

He tried to bale out apparently because he was decapitated by his [cockpit] hood slamming forward.

Immediately checked the other P-40s he'd been testing and found the wings rippled on 2 of them.

Just thoughtless. If White or self had dived them, not knowing, we would be finis.

FLIGHT LT Francis Walker Grosvenor died in August 1944. (HO was probably a nickname because no such acronym exists in the RAAF.) His mainplane wings did fail as Jack describes. Grosvenor's war record also notes a boisterous and loud personality. But he was a veteran of flying operations with No. 76 Squadron at Milne Bay from June 1942 to September 1943. He was shot down while flying a



Milne Bay, New Guinea, 1942. The p-40 Kittyhawk (q2) aircraft flown by Flying Officer Frank Grosvenor, No 76 Squadron RAAF, crashed in the jungle after he was shot down over Milne Bay. Flying Officer Grosvenor survived this incident, however he was later killed in an accident at Amberley, Qld, 1944-08-11. (D. Braund collection.)⁴²

Kittyhawk at Milne Bay in 1942. Perhaps this had something to do with Grosvenor's rashness in pushing planes beyond their capacity.²⁶

On the other hand, he may have been driven the need, which Jack describes above, to compensate for believing he hadn't been effective enough in combat action. But we'll never know what drove Francis Grosvenor to push planes so hard he finally ripped the wings off one.

As Jack said, 'A bloody nice bloke.'

Derek Rumbold, veteran of No. 79 Squadron, remembers HO Grosvenor from his time in New Guinea and Darwin.

In an email Derek writes:

'About Frank Grosvenor ... well, it is so very long ago I had to ask my tired old brain to recall anything that would be at all helpful. All I can recall of him is that he was indeed a very lively and likable character in the time that I knew him as one of 76 Sqdn at Milne Bay and then at Darwin I think. I am saddened to learn that he came to such an end and I can only wonder that he, or any other pilot, would put himself at such risk ... not to mention the extreme discomfort! I remember during an exercise that we called 'tail chasing' where one tried to shake off a pursuing aircraft where I pulled enough G that I not only blacked out (a common occurrence) but woke up upside down at the top half of what could be described as a loop having become unconscious and having let go my control of the aircraft and feeling momentarily very strange indeed! No damage to the aircraft however which was known to be very strongly built so Frank must have put an incredible stress on the machine alright.' (Pers. comm. 16 Oct. 2012.)

ONE OF a pilot's worst fears, mentioned by Jack in the previous entry and again by Derek Rumbold, was passing out at altitude. Jack's sister, Elizabeth Lusby, remembers Jack describing a frightening episode of flying while almost passing out. He had taken medication for a 'head cold' prescribed by one of those airforce doctors for whom he had small regard. Robert (Bob) Stove was flying behind Jack on the return trip and gave him the radio directions that kept him conscious and on track. Without Bob Stove's help he wouldn't have made it to the airstrip let alone a landing.

'Flaps up,' Bob had said in the final run. 'Now wheels down. That's it, Jack.' He kept it up until they'd landed. (Lizzie Lusby, pers. comm.)



*A spotting plane directs a rescue boat to a crashed aircraft on the Laloki River, NG, 1943.
(Drawing by Roy Hodgkinson.)³⁹*

And in one of those remarkable turns of events Lizzie Lusby found herself teaching Bob Stove's daughter, Roberta, years later at Mayfield. Lizzie forgave any highjinks, 'because her father had saved my brother!'

JACK'S DIARY entries end here – presumably in March 1945 when Jack's service record shows that he finished his attachment to Amberley, Qld. He was then posted with 8 Operational Training Unit at Parkes, in April, 1945 and from there to 2 Personnel Depot, Sydney, in June. He remained in Sydney until his discharge on 3 September 1945.

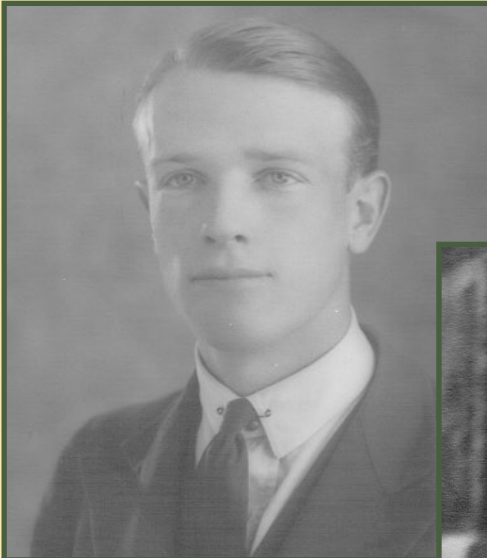
LONG AFTER the last salvo has been fired war continues to reverberate in those who have survived – and so it was for Jack. When the Second World War ended Jack picked up his career as a successful cartoonist and writer. The diaries are the only record of his experiences in a war he rarely mentioned. But he did joke about gremlins, those mischievous creatures believed by airmen to loosen rivets, muck up engines, and generally cause havoc in aircraft. Jack's memories bothered him like gremlins but he always maintained his trademark humour and gallantry.

**'There are some events that are so overwhelming ... You can't be above it
you can't be neutral you can't be untouched by it. You see it, you live it,
you experience it and it will be with you all of your days.'**

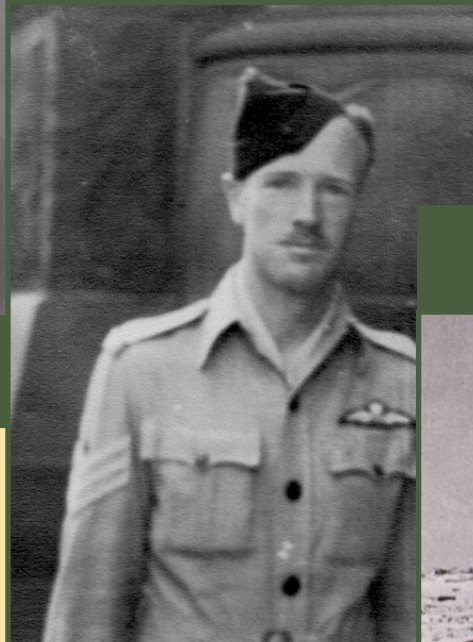
JOE GALLOWAY, war correspondent.

[3 Squadron STORIES](#)

[3 Squadron HOME/Search](#)



**Before the war – Jack
working as a cartoonist**




**During the war –
back in Australia**

**After the war – collecting stories:
this one on Bribie Island!**




*Jack centre with daughter, Maria, and local residents Hughie and his blue cattle dog,
on Bribie Island after the war. Sheila's crossed feet make an appearance
between Jack and Maria.*

APPENDIX A: Jack's Service Details



Australian Government



NATIONAL
ARCHIVES
OF AUSTRALIA

NameSearch

Item details

Item details for: A9300, LUSBY J V F

Title	LUSBY JOHN VIVIAN FITZHENRY : Service Number - 403935 : Date of birth - 19 Feb 1913 : Place of birth - DRUMMOYNE NSW : Place of enlistment - SYDNEY : Next of Kin - LUSBY SHEILA
Contents date range	1939 - 1948
Series number	A9300 Click to see which government agency or person created this item.
Control symbol	LUSBY J V F
Item barcode	5254457
Location	Canberra
Access status	Open
Date of decision	02 Mar 2012
Physical format	PAPER FILES AND DOCUMENTS (allocated at series level)
Records authority class number	1010873
Date registered	19 Sep 2002

Jack's service record photos on enlistment and at discharge.



Enlistment (aged 28)



Discharge (aged 32)

Postscript

In World War II, Australian aircrew fought in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East; over the North Atlantic, the Indian and Pacific Oceans and the Mediterranean; India, Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Thailand, China, the Netherland East Indies, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the Philippines and Borneo. They also fought over Australia, its territories and its approaches.

In late 1944, the RAAF peaked at over 182,000 personnel and 6,200 aircraft in 61 squadrons. In 1945 Australia had the fourth-largest air force in the world (after the USA, USSR and UK).

Over 215,000 men and women served between 1939-45, and 9,870 RAAF personnel lost their lives. Over 55 per cent of these deaths occurred in the air war against Germany over Europe.³¹

In all, over 27,000 Australians were killed in action and 23,000 were wounded in World War II.³²

Jack's War is dedicated to all of them.

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