THE LIZARDS THAT FLEW

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REFORMATION OF 3 SQUADRON AND OPERATION THOROUGHFARE

14 – 17 FEBRUARY 1969

MEMBERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN OPERATION THOROUGHFARE

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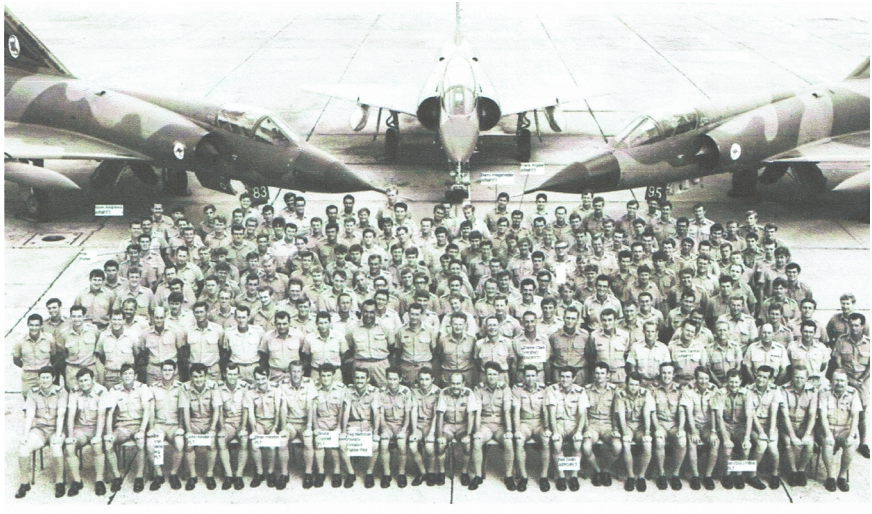


THE GUARDIANS OF THE LIZARDS

PREFACE

THE LIZARDS THAT FLEW REPRESENTS THE THOUGHTS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE OFFICERS, AIRMEN AND WIVES WHO DEPLOYED TO MALAYSIA WEF 17 FEBRUARY 1969.

FIFTY YEARS IS A LONG TIME; MEMORY GETS HAZY. THE STORIES AND INCIDENTS OUTLINED IN THIS PUBLICATION ARE AS ACCURATE AS THOSE SUPPLYING THE INFORMATION CAN REMEMBER.

THIS BOOK WAS PRODUCED TO COMMEMORATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF OPERATION THOROUGHFARE.

THE THANKS AND APPRECIATION GO TO ALL EX MEMBERS OF 3 SQUADRON FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THIS BOOK, AND FOR THEIR EFFORTS AND PROFESSIONALISM, ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF THE LEAD UP, DEPLOYMENT AND CONTINUING SUCCESS OF 3 SQUADRON.

Chapter 1

A Brief History of No 3 Squadron RAAF

By

Flying Officer M R Susans

As printed in 'Mirage' RAAF Williamtown Monthly
April 1968

No 3 Squadron, now in its 51st year is probably the RAAF's most historically famous squadron. Since its formation in 1916, 3 Squadron has taken part in two World Wars and has been actively engaged as a flying unit for over 40 years. Along with 1 and 2 Squadron, it is among the RAAF's oldest squadrons, and by far our most senior fighter squadron.

Throughout its period of service 3 Squadron has operated a variety of aircraft, from the RE 8's it used for reconnaissance along the front lines in Northern France, to the present day Mirage. With different aircraft, the squadron's role has varied, and has included reconnaissance, bombing, air defence, and with the advent of the Mirage, all-weather ground attack and photographic reconnaissance.

3 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps, was originally formed in Egypt in September 1916, as No 69 Sqn RFC.

Obtaining most of Its personnel from No 1 Squadron and from the light horse regiment in that theatre, the squadron was sent to England soon after Its formation for a period of intensive training before going to war In France. It departed Egypt In December 1916 under the command of the first CO, Major Blake.

On arrival In England 3 Sqn was untrained, unequipped and incompletely formed. It was sent to South Carlton In Lincolnshire In order to learn something of the machines it would have to operate in combat, and to be taught some of the finer points of the science of flying, such as shooting from the air, observation of country and navigation by compass.

On 24 August 1917, after eight months of training, the squadron with Its 18 aircraft departed South Carlton for France. Their flight took them via Lympne in Kent, where unfortunately one machine and two pilots were lost In a crash on take off; thence to St Omer In France, and finally to their appointed airfield at Savy in north-eastern France.

3 Squadron's arrival at Savy on 9 September 1917 made Air Force history as they had the honour of being the first Australian flying unit to arrive In France.

3 Squadron's task at Savy was that of reconnaissance and Intelligence work over the front line and not that of seeking combat. Nevertheless, the RE 8's found plenty of air-to-air combat in the course of that duty.

The squadron's first encounter with the enemy was on 21 October between Arras and La Bassee. The pilots, Capt Anderson and Lt Bell, while observing a bombardment by a 4.5" Howitzer battery, were attacked by four Albatross Scouts. Anderson maintained a gallant and skilful fight until two other RE 8's came to his assistance. The Germans retired

This feat was repeated many times as the slow, skilfully handled RE 8's operating in pairs, often out-fought the German fighters.

As the war progressed the squadron's capabilities expanded. The squadron pilots perfected new techniques and flew many missions involving artillery spotting, daylight bombing, counter artillery and ammunition dropping, all of which played an important part In the final outcome of the war.

It only remains to add that during its period of aerial operations No 3 Squadron occupied ten different aerodromes and carried out nearly ten thousand hours of active flying service. In the course of this period it observed and reported the effect of our artillery fire on 735 occasions, dropped some 6.000 bombs and fired approximately half a million rounds of small arms ammunition against enemy targets. During its photographic reconnaissance, over six thousand plates were exposed in photographing some 1200 square miles of enemy territory.

Eighty-eight pilots and 78 observers were at various times attached to the squadron, and of this number eleven pilots and thirteen observers were killed in action, twelve pilots and twelve observers being wounded. The average length of service for pilots with 3 Squadron was five months.

In the course of aerial activities over enemy lines, the squadron suffered a total loss of eleven aircraft, whilst a number of others were badly damaged but able to return to base. Enemy aircraft accounted for by the squadron totaled 51; 16 completely destroyed, eight shot down out of control and 27 damaged.

When it is remembered that 3 Squadron's principal duty was one of reconnaissance and not of combat, this number of aircraft destroyed and damaged is an achievement of some magnitude.

No 3 Squadron was a pioneer In Army-Air operations. After the Australian Corps was withdrawn from the line, No 3 gave air support to the 2nd United States Corps, which had no squadron of its own, and continued this Army cooperation until the Armistice - this being the first Australian-American combined operation in WW1.

No 3 Squadron also flew mails for the AIF, thus having the honour of being the first Australian air mall organisation.

On returning to Australia in 1919, 3 Squadron AFC was demobilised. Just six years later, on 1 July 1925, the squadron, under

the command of Fit Lt F W Lukis, was officially formed as a unit of the Royal Australian Air Force.

At this stage the squadron consisted of three flights. One flight, equipped with DH 9's, was used for Army co-op work, another was equipped with SE 5A's, and the third was a single engine bomber squadron equipped with DH9A's.

Shortly after Its reformation the squadron became one of the first flying units to move to Richmond RAAF station where it provided facilities for many notable aviators, including Amy Johnson, Jean Batter, Sir Charles Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm.

With the declaration of war on 3 September 1939, the RAAF was once again called upon to provide trained aircrew to fight overseas, and once again 3 Squadron was one of the first units to see action.

The squadron, under the command of Sqn Ldr I.D.McLachlan, sailed from Sydney on 15 July 1940. Ironically enough they were bound for Egypt where the squadron had been formed some 24 years previously. On arrival in Egypt, the squadron was equipped with Gladiator aircraft and called to immediate readiness.

As in the First World War, the squadron's main task was reconnaissance, in this case over the Italian positions. However, this did not prevent the Gladiator pilots from taking part in numerous air-to-air encounters.

The squadron's first air encounter of the Second World War was fought on 19 November by Sqn Ldr P Heath, Fit Lt Blake Pelly and Fig Offs A. Rawlinson and A. Boyd. This flight of four had been reconnoitering seven miles east of Rabia, northwest Egypt, when eighteen Italian fighters appeared on the scene. Nine of them attacked Pelly and he reported one enemy aircraft destroyed and another damaged. Sqn Ldr Heath was killed, but the Australian Gladiators generally had much the better of the fight. Boyd claimed to have seen

four of the attackers spin out of control, and Flg Off Rawlinson shot one down. As a result of courageous battles such as this the squadron's tally of enemy aircraft destroyed had risen to 47 by April 1941.

In May 1941, 3 Squadron was re-equipped with American-built Tomahawk fighters. Shortly after re-equipping, the order came from Britain for the Allied forces to attack Syria. The squadron, now under the command of Sqn Ldr Peter Jeffrey, took an active part in the Syrian campaign. On 8 June the Tomahawks shot up six Morane fighters on the ground, and a few days later they attacked and shot down six Glenn Martin bombers. The tally of enemy aircraft destroyed was rising rapidly and by the end of November had reached 106.

On 17 July, the two RAAF fighter squadrons in the area, 3 and 450, now equipped with Kittyhawk fighters, were moved to Pachino airfield in Sicily. From there, the squadron's aircraft attacked targets of opportunity on roads north of Catania. Shortly afterwards, the squadron moved to Agnone, 15 miles south of Catania, from where they mounted 190 sorties into the surrounding area. Eight Australian pilots were shot down but all except three managed to return to friendly territory. Sicily was cleared of the enemy by the end of August and 3 Sqn, now commanded by Sqn Ldr B. Eaton, was called in to support the invasion of Italy.

The first landing took place near Reggio on the southern tip of Italy and 3 Sqn played their part by answering many calls for close air support from the Army. The squadron's move to Italy was another historic event in that it became the first Allied squadron to be based on the soil of an enemy homeland.

For the remainder of the war, 3 Squadron, along with squadrons of the USAF and RAF, took part in the slogging drive up the Italian Peninsula. They supported the British 8th and American 5th Armies by bombing and strafing enemy troops, equipment and supply lines. The squadron played a noteworthy part in a campaign which resulted in Rome being taken on 4 June 1944.

By March 1945, 3 Squadron now equipped with Mustangs, had attacked targets as far north as Padua, Verona and Venice. Between 9 and 21 April, 3 and 450 Squadron flew 650 sorties in the last sustained close-support operation in Italy, during which the Germans withdrew across the River Po. Two weeks later, on 2 May, the German forces in Italy and western Austria surrendered unconditionally, and the long fighting advance from El Alameln was over.

No 3 Sqn had been fighting for 4½ years, and during this time had accrued the impressive total of 217 enemy aircraft destroyed during 25,663 hours of operational flying. Also during this period the squadron dropped 8,688,900 lbs of bombs, damaging or destroying 93 shipping vessels, 837 railway trucks and 73 bridges.

At the end of the war, 3 Sqn returned to Point Cook where it disbanded on 30 July 1946.

The squadron then re-formed in Canberra in 1948 where it operated Mustangs, again as an Army co-op and reconnaissance squadron, until it was once more disbanded in 1953.

As in the past, the squadron was out of action for only a short while. It re-formed at Williamtown under the command of Sqn Ldr Fred Barnes on 1 March 1956, and re-equipped with Sabre Jets.

On 27 October 1958, as a part of 78 Wing, commanded by Gp Capt (now Air Commodore) Cooper, 3 Sqn with its 19 Sabres left Williamtown for Malaysia. The squadron's arrival at Butterworth was the beginning of an eight-year tour of duty as an operational Sabre squadron in SE Asia.

During the tour at Butterworth the squadron took part in anti-Communist activities both on the Malay Peninsula and in Borneo, and also maintained an operational alert status throughout the Indonesian confrontation.

On 1 September 1966, whilst at Butterworth, No 3 Squadron celebrated its 50th anniversary, an important milestone in the history of the squadron, and indeed the RAAF.

No 3 Squadron has a history which is equaled by no other RAAF squadron. It has a proud reputation which is the result of 50 years of outstanding service by its members

Let us hope that the next half-century will be as illustrious and as successful as has been the past one for the Fast Flying Fighting Third.

Postscript

The more recent history of 3 Squadron is generally well known. The squadron returned with its Sabres to Williamtown from Butterworth In February of 1967 to re-equip with ground attack Mirages. Once the squadron was operational with its new aircraft, it returned to Malaysia to continue its task in that area. These aircraft were camouflaged giving rise to the 'lizard' nickname, with the lizard motif later being adopted by the squadron for the aircraft tail flash and pilots helmets.

In March 1986, 3 Squadron handed its Mirages and most of its personnel to 79 Squadron at Butterworth, with the remaining personnel headed to Williamtown to re-equip with the FA/18 Hornet.

And now, with the arrival of the F-35A Lightning 11, an exciting new era dawns for No 3 Squadron RAAF.

No 3 SQUADRON CREST

The flaming winged grenade symbolizes 3 Squadron's early days in the AFC and the RAAF as an Army Co-operation Squadron. The fleur-de-lis, or heraldic lily, was added lo indicate that 3 Squadron was one of the three AFC Squadrons to serve in the First World War. The motto "Operta Aperta" is shared by special agreement with No 16 Sqn

RAF. The literal translation “Hidden things are revealed” is shortened in heraldic parlance to “Secrets Revealed”. An even shorter version; ‘Up ‘n at ‘m!’ is popular on the hangar floor.

Chapter 2

Butterworth

Hugh Crowther

The Royal Air Force (RAF) developed the airfield at Butterworth in Province Wellesley, north Malaya, on the mainland opposite the island of Penang on a "care and maintenance" basis in 1939.

RAF Butterworth was officially opened in October 1941, as a Royal Air Force station which was a part of the British defence plan for defending the Malayan Peninsula against an imminent threat of invasion by the Imperial Japanese forces during World War II. It was it ill-prepared when Japan attacked the base in December 1941.

During the Battle of Malaya, the airfield suffered some damage as a direct result of aerial bombing from Mitsubishi G3M and Mitsubishi G4M bombers of the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service based in Saigon, South Vietnam. Brewster Buffalos from the airbase rose to challenge the escorting Mitsubishi A6M Zero fighters but were mauled during several of these engagements by the highly trained and experienced Japanese fighter pilots flying superior aircraft. Both RAF and RAAF aircraft were destroyed mostly on the ground and, following its rapid invasion of Malaya.

The RAF airfield was subsequently captured by units of the advancing 25th Army (Imperial Japanese Army) on 20 Dec 1941 and the control of the airbase was to remain in the hands of Japanese Army until the end of hostilities in September 1945. Whereupon the RAF resumed control

of the station and Japanese prisoners of war were made to repair the airfield as well as to improve the runways before resuming air operations in May 1946.

No 45 Squadron RAF de Havilland Venoms at RAF Butterworth, 1957 during the Malayan Emergency

During the Malayan Emergency that was to last from 1948 to 1960, RAF as well as RAAF and RNZAF units stationed at the airfield played an active role in helping to curb the communist insurgency in the jungles of Malaya by attacking suspected hideouts and harassing the communist guerrillas. After the war, in 1950, the RAF established Butterworth as part of their Far East Air Force bases, and squadrons based there were heavily involved in attacking communist targets during the twelve year Malayan Emergency.

The station also served as a vital front-line airfield for various other units on rotation from RAF Changi, RAF Kuala Lumpur, RAF Kuantan, RAF Seletar and RAF Tengah; RAF aircraft would also use the base as a transit point to and from other RAF bases in the Far East Air Force including Singapore, North Borneo and Hong Kong connecting it between RAF stations in the Indian Ocean (Gan), Middle East and Mediterranean regions.

Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Butterworth was established in 1955 as part of Australia's commitment to the Commonwealth's Far East Strategic Reserve, two RAAF fighter squadrons and a bomber squadron were stationed at Butterworth throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In 1955 the airfield was upgraded by No 2 Airfield Construction Squadron RAAF, which took two-and-a-half years. In 1957, the RAF closed the station and transferred the airfield to the Royal Australian Air Force and it was promptly renamed as RAAF Base Butterworth, becoming the home to numerous Australian fighter and bomber squadrons stationed in Malaya during the Cold War era. Although owned by the RAF, Butterworth was formerly placed under the RAAF's control from July 1958.

Early Operations

As the Communist Emergency got underway the six Lincoln aircraft of No 1 Squadron RAAF Arrived in Malaya in July 1950, just one month after the Dakotas of No. 38 Squadron, they were the only heavy bombers in the area until 1953 when they were joined by some RAF Lincolns. The Australian Lincolns were therefore the mainstay of the Commonwealth bombing campaign, especially in the early years of the conflict when the outcome was still in doubt. From 1950 to 1958 No 1 Squadron flew 4,000 missions in Malaya. The squadron flew both pinpoint-bombing and area-bombing missions as well as night harassment raids - flying among many targets but only dropping bombs occasionally - in the manner of the RAF "siren raids" of the Second World War

Operation Termite in July 1954 was a high point of the squadron's service in Malaya. Five Australian Lincolns and six Lincolns from No 148 Squadron RAF took part in this operation against guerrilla camps in Northern Malaya. The Lincolns carried out a series of bombing runs and ground attacks in conjunction with paratrooper drops. The long range and heavy payload of the Lincoln made it an effective bomber, while its relatively slow speed proved advantageous in Malaya when trying to locate jungle targets. Butterworth was only a secondary landing field during these operations.

The No 2 Airfield Construction Squadron RAAF built the main runway at Butterworth airfield as well as the control tower, fuel storage facilities, hangars, accommodation and other infrastructure. Butterworth, in northern Malaya near Penang, was leased from the British by the Australian government in order to provide a base for the RAAF component of the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve (Far East Air Force)

The old runway at Butterworth needed to be strengthened and extended so that the base could accommodate the RAAF's Canberra jet bombers.

Although Butterworth had been used as an airfield during the Second World War, in order to accommodate modern jet aircraft it needed substantial improvements including a new 1.9 kilometre runway, part of which had to be built over swamps and paddy fields, No 2 Airfield Construction Squadron began work at Butterworth in late 1955. The squadron's 300 personnel were assisted by 600 Malay, Chinese and Indian labourers. Although the monsoonal environment and the waterlogged terrain meant that conditions were often trying, the airfield was completed by February 1958.

No 2 Squadron Arrives

When No 2 Squadron's Canberra bombers arrived in July 1958 Butterworth became the RAAF's most forward operational airbase. The Canberra bombers of No 2 Squadron started flying missions from Butterworth immediately after arriving including formation bombing runs against Communist guerrilla targets. No 2 Squadron also had four DC3 (Dakota) aircraft which were used in the main to service the Australian Embassies in Bangkok, Phnom Penh, Vientiane and Saigon for mail, milk and supplies and to serve as a taxi for embassy staff and families; a service we called the milk run. These aircraft stayed on at Butterworth after 2 Squadron moved to Phan Rang Vietnam in 1967.

No 3 and 77 Squadrons Arrive

Six years later from August 1964 onwards RAAF units No 3 Squadron and No 77 Squadron also saw service with their Sabres during the Malayan Emergency flying strafing missions from Butterworth against Communist guerrilla targets. Through the Confrontation with Indonesia, these Sabre jets responded on several occasion to incursions by MiG-21 fighter jets of the Indonesian Air Force flying towards Malaysian airspace but the Indonesian aircraft always turned back before crossing the international boundary, thereby averting possible escalation.

Full Complement

By late 1964 Butterworth was home to the RAAF's 78 Fighter Wing, comprising No 3 and No 77 Sabre Fighter Squadrons, an independent No 2 Canberra Bomber Squadron which also comprised a transport DC3 Dakota Flight. No 5 UH-1 Iroquois Helicopter Squadron which also saw active service during the 1964 emergency before being transferred by RAN Aircraft Carrier HMAS Sydney to and becoming No 9 Squadron (for political reasons - it didn't look like a direct transfer) on arrival in Vietnam. Also during 1964 the RAAF established a Sabre Fighter presence from 78 Wing in Ubon Thailand at the invite of the Thai Government to defend against Communist insurgency following the Battle of the Plane of Jars in neighbouring Laos, this presence was later joined by a number of USAF Squadrons. The 78 Wing support for operations in Thailand was not subject to approval of the Malaysian Government thus Ubon was referred to as Point B and Sabre aircraft transfers between Butterworth and Ubon were accompanied by Canberra cover aircraft. Ubon was manned as far as pilots and maintenance crew on three month rotation from Butterworth with major servicing's also being carried out at Butterworth. Although the Emergency ended in 1960 and Confrontation in 1966, because of the tensions in South East Asia, the Australian Government kept the No 2 Canberra Bomber Squadron RAAF in Malaysia until April 1967. It then was transferred to Phan Rang as part of the allied war on Communism.

Confrontation January 1963 - August 1966

In September 1964, during the Indonesian Confrontation, Indonesian aircraft dropped paratroopers into Johor, which increased tensions; following riots in Singapore, a state of emergency was declared. On 3 September, 77 Squadron placed four Sabre Fighter aircraft on five-minute alert and its remaining aircraft on one-hour alert. All aircraft were armed with Sidewinder missiles and 30 mm guns, and were fitted with drop tanks. On 7 September, 3 Squadron moved six aircraft to Royal Air Force Base Changi, on Singapore, and the rest of the squadron came under 77 Squadron's command, before also going on

to Singapore. An extra 15 aircraft and 52 ground crew were ferried in from Australia to help maintain the seven-day-a-week alert. By the end of the month, tensions were easing, with only two aircraft on standby. However, in November fears again escalated, when 90 Indonesians attempted to land at Malacca; both Squadrons were placed on high alert.

RAAF Mirage Aircraft Replace Sabres

No 75 Squadron RAAF operating the Mirage IIIOs, arrived at Butterworth on 18 May 1967 with a detachment based at RAF Tengah in Singapore. No 3 Squadron, equipped with MirageIIIO-A, configured to ground attack, returned on 17 February 1969.

As of October 2008, the Australian Defence Force continues to maintain a presence at RMAF Butterworth as part of Australia's commitment to the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), with No. 324 Combat Support Squadron RAAF and a detachment of AP-3C Orion aircraft from No 92 Wing RAAF being located at the airfield. In addition, the Australian Army maintains an infantry company (designated Rifle Company Butterworth) at Butterworth for training purposes.

RMAF Butterworth 1988-2014

Butterworth was transferred to the Malaysian Government in 197. On 30 June 1988 Butterworth was handed over to the Royal Malaysian Air Force and renamed RMAF Station Butterworth. The flying Squadron stationed there during this time were: No. 3 Squadron RMAF, with S-61A4A Nuri helicopters; No. 12 Squadron RMAF, with Northrop F-5E, F-5F & RF-5E; No. 15 Squadron RMAF, with BAE Hawk 108/Hawk 209 & Aermacchi MB-339AM; and No. 18 Squadron RMAF, with Boeing F/A-18D Hornets

Chapter 3

Mirage - An Australian Illusion

Tory Mumford

Preface

This is a personal account of some fourteen sequential years of service "on Mirages", from the point of view of a "groundie" who was first an airman, then a senior NCO and finally a commissioned officer during that involvement. I was privileged, along with a very select band of brothers, to experience the Mirage from the factories and assembly lines of France, through the flight lines, hangars and maintenance workshops of Australia and Malaysia, to the corridors of "power" at Support Command and Air Force Office (which were in quite another country - God knows where!)

The Mirage program enabled me to receive both educational and overseas experiences which I probably never could have gotten without the Mirage purchase. The experience of learning a foreign language from scratch, then having to rely on that language to study advanced technology was challenging to say the least. The months spent in France were some of the most interesting of my life, despite the problems there which frustrated us.

In telling the Mirage story as I saw it, my tale may not always accord with the official account. Much of that account may indeed be fact but, in my opinion, too many careers were on the line when the short-comings of both the overseas training program and the aircraft itself became apparent, for the record to be completely straight. (But that, as they say, is another story).

I have been as accurate as notes and my memory after over fifty years

have allowed me to be. The opinions expressed are entirely my own and are not necessarily those of the RAAF, of which I was a proud member for nearly forty years, thirty of them PAF and ten Active Reserve. Nor is it my intent to malign, in any way at all, individuals or organisations. Should any reader feel that I have, then I apologise to them. As the Godfather said, it is "nothing personal - just business".

Early Days

Like most of the "troops" involved in the fighter world in the late 1950s, to me the fighter replacement program was a nebulous entity. Occasional items appeared in RAAF News - the candidate aircraft short-list was this, RAAF thinking was that, the public servants were thinking of something else (as usual). At the lower end of the command chain, we were content to allow our superiors to select our next toy and trusted them to choose wisely. We still tended to believe in fairies and Santa Claus, too

At that time, we were operating the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation Avon Sabre jet aircraft, having converted variously from World War Two piston-engined Mustangs, then latter-day Vampire and Meteor jets. The CAC Sabre was a fine if somewhat dated aircraft made perhaps a little superior to its American cousin, the F-86, by the use of a Rolls Royce Avon jet engine. This substitution, we "groundies" understood, gave the pilot such low-revs/low-airspeed control that the wing leading-edge slats fitted to the Mark 20s could be done away with, in favour of an integral leading-edge fuel tank, so increasing the Sabre's "legs", or on-board fuel.

"Legs" were the critical factor in our operations, because Australian geography imposed huge distances between air bases capable of operating jet fighters, (there very few of those in the pre-civil-aviation-jet days) and our most frequent deployment was to Australia's north, usually Darwin. "Legs" were our perennial problem.

The almost invariable jump-off point for Darwin was the RAAF base at

Garbutt, a suburb of Townsville. To fly to Townsville from our base at Williamtown, certainly to fly from Townsville to Darwin, the Sabre required large external ferry tanks called "jugs" in the ground-crew vernacular.

With no wind or a tail wind, the Sabre could just reach Darwin from Townsville with the requisite minimum fuel remaining on-board if we towed the aircraft out to the end of the Townsville strip and fuelled it to overflowing. The pilot would then "light the fire" and take off immediately, scramble-style. With any sort of headwind, and these were frequent, it was far too dicey even to try.

While this appears to have nothing to do with the Mirage, I have made the point to illustrate that at all levels in the RAAF the impositions of the tyranny of distance and the consequent need for adequate "legs" for fighters were well known. Consequently, logic dictated that any replacement fighter would surely have to have the integral fuel to fly from Townsville to Darwin easily, better still Williamtown to Darwin. Even better still, it should have an air-to-air refuelling capability, to allow the use of tanker aircraft when exercising with our "Great and Friendly Allies" (The Brits and the Americans), both of whom had this facility in plenty. Alas, “legs” and logic seemed to play little part in fighter replacement selection.

In the course of things, the Sabres were deployed to Butterworth in Malaya (as it was then known). Indonesia being closed to us in the late 1950s, we flew a torturous ferry route of pathetically short hops through northern Australia, Dutch New Guinea, the Philippines, Borneo and on to Butterworth. Insufficient "legs", you see? At Butterworth at last, we settled in for a two year tour.

We worked hard in the daytime heat and we played hard in the Penang nightspots during our off-duty hours (I was still single then). The Malayan Emergency being still "on", we even flew on operations against the remnant of the Communist terrorists hiding in the jungles covering the mountains behind Butterworth. With all these distractions

we forgot all about the replacement fighter, until it was announced in RAAF News - the French Mirage III.

What? What about the F4 Phantom? Forget about the Phantom, we were told. So we went up to the base library, drew out a copy of Jane's All The World's Aircraft and looked up the Mirage. Much invective from all present!

The Mirage, we discovered, was an interceptor with minimum integral fuel. In the European air defence environment for which it was designed (and for which it was excellent - as the Israelis showed many times), with reduced early warning and consequent need for interceptors to climb rapidly to meet threats, plus many available landing fields near at hand, the Mirage didn't need much fuel. Besides, it had a booster rocket to power it up to altitude. Who needed "legs"?

And deployments in Australia, with the huge distances to travel? With all the hassles of multiple staging posts, ground crews spread all over the country manning them, exercises being delayed while the ground crews were rounded up and ferried on to the exercise site and all the other "legs" problems well known with the Sabre? Not a priority, it seemed. We stopped believing in fairies, et al.

Back in Australia in 1961 after the Butterworth tour, I was posted to C130s at Richmond in NSW. The Hercs weren't fighters (and I was a fighter man through and through), but the on-board electronic technology was up-market from the Sabre, so that was fine as far as I was concerned. As a RADTECHA, the C130 radar and navigation aids were a challenge for one who had hitherto thought airborne radar was for gun-laying and nav-aids were a radio compass.

One morning early in the New Year 1962, I was peremptorily summoned to the office of the OC 86 Wing. Gulp! What had I done?! The interview was short and to the point.

I had been selected to participate in the Mirage fighter replacement program, the OC told me. This would mean a course of French

language training in Melbourne, followed by a period of instruction in France on the aircraft and its equipment, under the auspices of its maker, Avions Marcel D'Assault, and the French Air Force. Was I willing to go?

Does the sun rise in the east? That would mean that I would return to fighters. Whacko, you beaut!

I spent the best part of the last six months of 1962 learning French at the RAAF School of Languages at Point Cook. It turned out to be a meeting of old friends. Most (but not all) of us on the French course were recently returned from Butterworth, with considerable experience on Sabres.

We quickly knitted together as a team, but our language skills varied markedly. We had been chosen for our technical abilities and experience on fighters, not linguistic talent. Some of us became quite fluent in French, others not so.

After the language course and on return to No 86 Wing at Richmond to await orders to go to France, I found that I was redundant there. The Wing hadn't expected me back. I was given a mythical slot in the Communications Flight of the Wing, which supplied a variety of aircraft for use by pilots on staff at HQ Operational Command. There was little to do, so I practised French conversation each day with a Frenchman, a civilian medical technician based at No 3 RAAF Hospital at Richmond.

That was a very good thing, because I found in France that the last thing, the very last thing a Frenchman will ever tell you is that he speaks English. Not only were most of them Anglophobes at that time (there were a few exceptions), but generally they would rather that you make an idiot of yourself in their language, than they make one of themselves in yours. It was a situation which would have a marked effect on the Mirage program.

Tu ParleFrançais, Toi?

To give the authorities their due, they had foreseen some of the language difficulties we would face when we got to France. When we arrived there we found that, to offset some of these, Avions Marcel D'Assault had hired and assigned interpreters for our use. The small group of electronics technicians over there got a charming man.

Rudi Martel was in his late sixties, a French gentleman in every sense of the word. An officer survivor of the terrible fighting at Verdun in World War One, he was refreshingly free of any military class distinction when dealing with us "other ranks". He looked and spoke like Maurice Chevalier, almost the spitting image, and he seemed to know everyone in and everything about France. We had a ball in his company, both culturally and socially speaking.

He accompanied us on our first few weeks to factories and assembly plants in Paris and at Bordeaux. Nothing was too much trouble for him and wherever we went, he seemed to know everyone from the Managing Director downwards. We worked a six day week and on the seventh he squired us around Paris and its environs, giving us a course on recent French political, social and military history.

This was the time when dissident French Army personnel from the OAS were trying to kill General de Gaulle and one could never be sure, in a restaurant or night-club in Montmartre, Pigalle, or the sous-sols of the Left Bank, that bombs or a spray of automatic weapons fire wouldn't be the specialty of the day. The assassination attempt against General de Gaulle at Petit Clamart, publicised in the book and film "The Day of the Jackal", occurred while we were there. Accordingly, all civilised bets were off, both the Paris police agents and the federal gendarmerie were armed military-style, would shoot at the drop of a hat and frequently did.

An innocent woman was machine-gunned in her car one evening when she failed to see and so stop in time at a police road-block. Having been rendered immune by flashing our passports and shouting

Touriste! Touriste! we watched helplessly one night in a Left Bank restaurant patronised by students from the Sorbonne, while the CRS, the French federal riot police, indiscriminately beat up almost everyone there. The less said about that body of absolute bastards the better. I truly felt safer in the Old City of Jerusalem during the Intifada in the late 1980s, than in Paris in early 1963.

Despite these distractions we were determined to prevail and Rudi bent over backwards to help. He smoothed things out for us in an incalculably valuable way in those early days, as we struggled to cope with the totally foreign environment.

It was far more difficult than Malaya, where cultural differences were largely offset by the fact that most indigenes spoke English. In France at that time, your progress in everything from studies to just simple domestic things like ordering a meal was in direct proportion to your ability to speak and read French. That we were able to get down to work so productively so quickly was entirely owing to Rudi.

What he couldn't do, however, was interpret technical French, particularly state-of-the-art technical terms in electronics, our greatest need. So we borrowed French technical manuals from our commercial hosts and the best linguists among us spent half of each night translating them with the aid of technical dictionaries. We soon learned the terms.

Then we ran into a technology gap in both our training and experience. Three-dimensional-trigonometry-based resolvers, transistors and some of the more complicated printed-circuit-board techniques were all new to us.

Laughable, isn't it, in these days of super-integrated-circuits and quantum computers, but it was leading-edge stuff in those days, the RAAF had nothing like it, or if it had we hadn't seen it and so we were ignorant. There was no Base Tech Library for us to draw upon, so we hurriedly had books in English on the subjects sent across to us from

England, at our own expense - no repayment, they were considered private purchases. Typical!

Some of the Mirage electronic equipment was simply an up-grade of electronics with which we were quite familiar. The French UHF communications systems, for example, were cousins of the American UHF radios already fitted to many RAAF aircraft, e.g. the Sabre. They both came from the same parent - German technology looted by both countries at the end of World War Two. Some of the systems, however, were staggeringly difficult and complicated.

One item which was completely new but, though high-tech, neither difficult nor complicated was the BZ Tail-Warning Radar Receiver. Two of us went for a week to the factory manufacturing and supplying this neat little item, where we were instructed on it by its designer, a Pole resident in France who spoke excellent English, including all the English technical terms.

In three days we learnt all there was to know about its design, construction, function and maintenance. With a multiplicity of test points, no special-to-type test equipment required and incorporating a comprehensive self-test function, we thought the device to be the epitome of modern electronic equipment. If there was one installation which we would thoroughly know on the Mirage, this would be it, we said to each other.

Course over, we reported its success to the Air Attache staff controlling all trainees and training in-country. They seemed not quite as enthusiastic as we were. Pity it went so well, they said. The RAAF has decided not to buy the equipment, so it was a wasted week.

Every Mirage single-seat aircraft we ever flew was fully fitted for that device, but not with it. Whenever I saw the empty racks and cabling over the next several years I would just shake my head.

We trainees started to pick up interesting facts about the Mirage and

its purchase. One night we were all bused to Melun-Villaroche, the D'Assault flight test airfield on the River Seine up-stream from Paris. There a big PR ceremony was held, TV cameras and all the trimmings, to celebrate the official handing over of the first Australian version of the Mirage, designated the Series III O, airframe number A3-01

Why "III O", we asked a somewhat inebriated French company executive over our umpteenth glass of champagne. Simple, he said.

The basic aircraft purchased by Australia is the Mirage III E, the standard second-generation Mirage fighter used by the French Air Force. But the Australians have asked for special modifications (e.g. a fuel tank in the rocket bay in lieu of the booster rocket, an American TACAN in lieu of the French version and other similar changes), so that meant differentiating the Series III E designation - to Mirage III EA, "A" for Australia.

But the designation "A" is reserved by the French aviation authorities for prototype aircraft, so that meant further differentiation - to Mirage III EAU, "AU" for Australia. But EAU is a word in French, eau, meaning water, and that is not a good name for a fighting aircraft. So D'Assault decided to designate the Australian Mirage a Series III O. Sounded the same, you see. Simple, n'est pas?

The inebriated Frenchman also gave us another and quite startling piece of information. Did we know why our Government bought the Mirage instead of the Phantom? No, we replied, very interested. Why?
Wheat, replied the man. France owed Australia money for wheat. Lots of money. Australia needed a new fighter. For a special price, France offered to produce that new fighter in quantities sufficient to cut out the money owed for wheat. Simple, n'est pas?

We just stared at each other. That couldn't be true! Could it? Would the RAAF really allow that sort of thing to dictate its operational requirement?

I still don't know if he was pulling our legs, or if that really was the case. I do know however, that the prices charged by the French for everything we bought were utterly exorbitant. They were out to maximise returns in every possible way. So maybe it was true. But more of that later.

Then came the most intensive and complicated part of our electronics training in France, the Mirage fire control radar with its integrated gunsight, cannon and missile systems. For this training a team of RADTECHAs, INSTFITTs and ARMFITTs, all with electronics backgrounds or training, assembled at the radar manufacturer's premises at Malakoff, a suburb of Paris.

Our instructors were to be the best engineers the Company had, some of whom had participated in system design, the ideal teachers. There were, however, a few problems.

For example, none of them could speak (or would admit to speaking) intelligible English. Also, they had inexplicably been told that we were all qualified engineers. Their lectures were accordingly in French and pitched way above our technical level. Even the most fluent French speakers among us, and by now there were several, could not follow the technical explanations. Our ignorance was technical, not linguistic. At the end of the first week came the collective explosion.

There was one hell of a wrangle between us, the French engineers, the radar manufacturer company executives and the Air Attache staff who had been hurriedly called by those executives. Our collective goodwill towards the French (and, I must admit, towards the Air Attache staff controlling the training) was starting to wear thin, so we weren't diplomatic

.

We were not engineers, we said, with hard looks at the Air Attache staff, whatever the Company had been told. Our technical level as a group was not up to the standard of the engineers, even if they lectured in English. We were collectively fed up to the back teeth with

being stuffed around by experts. We needed technical data in English, we wanted lectures pitched to technician level in English and we wanted both now! Our attitude and conduct that day, I freely confess it, verged on the mutinous.

There was some embarrassment among the Company people as they discussed these demands with the Air Attache staff. Our incredulous ears picked up the fact that the technical manuals contracted to be supplied in English were not yet available (they appeared at Williamtown two years after our return to Australia, full of mistakes both linguistically and technically). In fact, the Company had been hoping that the notes we would have taken during the lectures would form the basis of those manuals.

After the heat died down, we sorted out a barely acceptable substitute solution. The engineer instructors would pitch their instruction at technician level - in French. Further, manuals on the French version of the radar would be provided for us to study - in French.

An interpreter would be engaged to translate lectures into English. We would take notes and the engineers would check them for errors (how, if they spoke no English?!) and retain copies. We would also be given hands-on training to consolidate the lectures on the factory floor where, paradoxically, some of the younger technicians with post-war schooling could speak reasonable English. Problem solved – superficially.

The French radar manuals eventually supplied were for the original version of the radar, the Mark I. Another explosion. We were buying the Mark II, so where were the French Mark II manuals, we asked? The French Air Force had them all, we were told, and won't release them. Sorry! So make some copies, then, we said. Not in the contract, we were told blandly (this was before the advent of the ubiquitous photo-copier). Sorry! We appealed to the Air Attaché staff and got the same answer. Sorry!

The interpreter engaged was not one of those who had been with us for several months and who therefore knew our linguistic strengths and weaknesses. He was an unemployed maths master, who knew nothing about the complicated technology we were trying to learn. He did however speak excellent English, so between his English and our knowledge of technical French we muddled through, even if our queries often required several time-consuming iterations between the questioner, the interpreter, and the lecturer.

The final phase of our instruction required some of us from the course to move from the factories of Paris to a French Air Force base at Mont-de-Marsan, in south-western France near the Spanish border. There, we were told, we would learn Mirage flight-line procedures, practices and first line maintenance. Right away we ran into two more problems (what a surprise!).

First was that the local French military commanders were loath to have us touch their aircraft. If one "speared in" as a result of our actions, or lack of them, who would be responsible, they asked? A fair enough stand.

Second, none of the French enlisted personnel with whom we were to train spoke any English at all. Our interpreters had been assigned elsewhere, it being felt (quite wrongly) by those controlling matters in Canberra that after some months in France we should all be fluent in all things French and so would no longer need them.

We had a brand-new set of French technical terms to learn, many of which were in the French Air Force argot or idiom (just as ours are in RAAF idiom, e.g. “jugs”) and thus were not in any technical dictionaries. More critical, just being on a busy flight line not knowing French Air Force procedures, hand-signals and alert phrases constituted an aircraft safety hazard.

We were walking "foreign objects"! How then were we to train on the flight line and learn first line maintenance?

On our own initiative we came to an arrangement with the French Senior NCOs. They would instruct us in the morning in French, with our best French speaker translating for the others. Then we would put the morning's theory into practice on the flight line in the afternoon, under the strict supervision of those French NCOs.

It worked fine for a fortnight and we learned a lot, until the Air Attache staff heard of the arrangement. A blistering reprimand came down to us over the phone. We were to get out of the classroom and onto the flight-line, quick-time and full-time. Period! That in itself blew any chance of further progress. But worse was to come.

In their wisdom, or more correctly their stupidity, the Air Attache staff formally complained to the French about the situation. Down the French Air Force hierarchy came the boot, stopping at the very SNCOs who had been so helpful. From that time on we were dead as far as the French Air Force at any level was concerned. No further help, no flight line training, no nothing!

We complained to the Air Attache staff about it and, belatedly, they tried to recover the situation, but they too got nowhere, being neatly hoist with their own petard. We left the air base and, there being no more courses scheduled, we returned to Australia.

The Squadrons

Most of us originals were posted to 481 Maintenance Squadron at Williamtown. There, we faced a massive task. It was September 1963 and the first Mirage was not due until March 1964. In that time we had to train up sufficient personnel to man the No 2 Operational Conversion Unit Mirage flight which initially would handle the aircraft as they arrived. This meant drafting courses of training and training objectives, writing out training notes and duplicating training material from our own plentiful personal notes and electronic circuit diagrams (there was nothing else available at that time, not even in French).

Also, of course, we had to learn how to lecture constructively, none of us ever having done so.

Added to that, we had to receive and check the increasing volume of Mirage stores and test equipment coming in and to set up workshops in the brand new buildings built for us. We had to carry out modifications to a lot of that equipment, to make it compatible with Australian power supplies, connectors, electrical safety standards and a host of other minor problems associated with new foreign equipment. Sometimes the new buildings themselves required modification, to conform with the new equipment dimensions, critical length cables, etc. Frequently we were called to the base equipment store to decipher French inscriptions on stores containers and documents.

On three separate occasions some of us had to fly down to Avalon, where the first Mirages were being assembled, to help out with technical and/or language problems there for the civilian personnel doing the assembly. We worked damned hard.

Fortunately, early in 1964 some of the first of the French technical representatives arrived and some of our insoluble problems got solved. They were a good bunch, experts in their individual fields, they nearly all spoke good English, with those who didn't not too proud to admit it. They were all "let's get it done right now" types and we got on famously.

They started to take on some of our ancillary burdens, by local arrangement and on the quiet I might add, as they weren't there to read stores documents. We had learned after the Mont-de-Marsan incident not to go public with our individual initiatives.

Somehow, by March we were ready. The Tech Reps had taken a bunch of us out to lunch at Port Stephens to celebrate. I seem to recall it was the 24th March, or somewhere about that date. As we ate and drank the local wine and reminisced about our days in France, we heard a strange jet aircraft pass over. It swung in over the Port and headed into

the base. The first Mirage had arrived at Williamtown.

Four RAAF pilots had trained on Mirages in France as instructors, some of them at the French Air Force base where we had been. These pilots trained the first pilot course while we trained the ground crews. Then some of us "originals" were assigned to the OCU temporally as ground crew for the Mirage Flight, to do the first Mirage deployment north with the newly trained pilots.

As far as problems associated with distance were concerned, we quickly learned that little had changed from the Sabre days. Mirage all-up fuel was such that it was still very hairy flying from Townsville to Darwin with any sort of head-wind. Big “jugs” were still required, negating the aircraft’s ability to fly supersonic and so halve transit time. As for on-board electronic equipment, the Mirage was much worse off.

Unlike the Sabre, the Mirage had no long-range radio compass, only the latest, modern, short-range TACAN, which relied on special-to-type ground beacons and which was useless between the extreme ranges of the Townsville beacon and the Darwin beacon. Later, the RAAF's Air Transportable Telecommunications Unit put a transportable ground TACAN beacon at Mt Isa for deployments, but there was still a lot of uncovered space out there in the Great Australian FA, or GAFA as it was known.

The Mirage did have an on-board, dead-reckoner-type navigation device, which in theory enabled an aircraft to fly from way-point to way-point on a previously calculated flight-path. It needed, however, two devices for accuracy; an on-board doppler drift radar to provide wind-drift up-dates throughout the flight, and a ground-based gyroscopic "standard", to set the on-board gyro as a reference point before take-off. Unfortunately, neither of these items were available during the first two years of the Mirage's operational service.

Many an old, bold Mirage pilot can relate hair-raising and completely

factual stories about being lost between Townsville and Darwin, and of getting in safely solely because of a chance recognition of an outlying homestead by the name on its roof, or finding the incomplete Darwin-Alice Springs railway line to follow north before they ran out of fuel. That we didn't lose a bird in those early days somewhere in the GAFA is a credit to both air and ground crews, each in their own way.

When we arrived in Darwin we experienced at first hand the legacy D'Assault left us when that company decided to do their hot-country trials on the Mirage in the Sahara Desert. Not much moisture in the air at ground level there, but a hell of a lot at the same level in Darwin. Add to that the customary rapid descent the aircraft made from the "cold soak" of operational altitudes to the humidity of the Darwin tarmac and you got exactly the same effect that the outside of a cold glass of beer shows in the tropics. Mega-condensation!

Condensation by the cup-full had to be dried out of the various equipment bays after each flight. The vital TACAN transceiver was mounted vertically in such a way that its air-cooling ducts acted like a funnel and the subsequent pool of water at the bottom of the mounting rack (where the main electrical connector was housed) popped circuit breakers all over the aircraft. There were similar problems in other technical spheres and we used up whole forests of trees writing out defect reports. Great start for a new bird, we all thought.

In 1965, the first Mirage fighter squadron was formed, No 75, designated an air defence squadron. OCU continued to churn out pilots for the squadron, so much so that some of the pilot "originals" had gone on to other things. By this time, too, a proper ground Field Training Flight had been formed at Williamtown, more than two thirds of the maintenance personnel on base had passed through it to become Mirage-trained, some of the initial bugs had been ironed out of both the aircraft and its systems and all things were starting to go well.

Towards the end of 1965, the second Mirage air defence squadron, No 76, was formed and I was posted to it. It immediately took over from 75 Squadron the chore of manning the Darwin Mirage detachment, releasing 75 to prepare for its forth-coming move to Butterworth in Malaysia.

From its inception, 76 was the "poor relation". 75 received the latest aircraft, handing its originals over to 76 and/or the OCU. The best of everything, trained men, ground equipment, spares and anything else they desired went to 75. Like a supplicant at a rich man's table, 76 only got the crumbs.

But No 76 Squadron's greatest problem was the Darwin Detachment. This had been put in place in the Sabre days, during the Indonesian Confrontation period of the early 1960s. That war was long over, yet the RAAF pundits still kept the Detachment going with Mirages, probably to exercise the Control and Reporting Unit stationed permanently in Darwin. To put it bluntly, that Detachment was an absolute bugger!

No 76 Squadron had to put a full flight of aircraft and associated pilots and ground crew in Darwin even before it had properly formed with its allotted complement of aircraft and people, rotating the flight and its personnel every two months. In some trades there weren't enough personnel yet assigned to the Squadron and the men in them had to rotate turn and turn about.

This caused havoc among the married men and their families, with divorce and other domestic troubles resulting. Had the single members of the Squadron not volunteered to stay on for consecutive rotations, easing a little the pressures on the short-manned trades, very serious disciplinary problems also would have resulted.

Priority had to be given to the Detachment in all matters, particularly the Squadron's meagre allocation of spare parts, the supply of which from France was sporadic at best, with the lion’s share going to 75.

Also, a considerable modification program was under way on the aircraft themselves, some to catch up those modifications which should have been done during production, but most were owing to defects and their remedies. This state of affairs put a crippling strain on the Squadron which took years to overcome.

There were days when there was only one serviceable aircraft on the 76 Squadron flight line at Williamtown, for a dozen pilots. Shift work and weekend work in the hangars were almost de rigeur, further adding to the domestic problems. The squadron engineering personnel really earned their pay during that time.

In 1966, French factory technicians arrived to modify the fire control radar to incorporate a ground-attack capability. This converted radar, designated the Mark II B, would then be fitted to aircraft assigned to the first ground attack Mirage unit, No 3 Squadron, which had just arrived back in Australia from Malaysia where it had been flying Sabres since its deployment there in 1958.

Now a sergeant, I was given the task of handling the radar modification program, to be carried out in the No 481 Squadron radar workshops. My selection was probably owing to my background as an "original", but more owing I think to the fact that I spoke a reasonable brand of French. I certainly did not mind, as it released me from 76, with all its legion of problems.

The two French technicians spoke absolutely no English when they arrived (although they spoke social English reasonably well by the time they left). They were a pair of wild boys, very good at their work, but as they were both single and were paid extraordinarily well with all the allowances they received (money which reportedly came out of the Mirage contract), they lived the high life as only young Frenchmen can. Three times I had to go to court for them, to interpret when they ran afoul of the Newcastle constabulary; twice for DUI, and once (inevitably) for a paternity suit (it turned out to be trumped up). Quite apart from the disruption to the modification program these incidents

caused, playing nursemaid was an extra-curricular chore I personally did not appreciate.

I finally threatened them that the next time they came before the "beak" I'd interpret for them in such a way that the judge would lock them up for contempt. It must have had some effect, because I didn't have to appear for them again before they left Australia.

However, before that occurred I left them, as I was commissioned at the end of 1966 and spent several months away from Williamtown in 1967 on the various officer courses. On completion of those courses I was given my posting and, looking at it, thought I was the victim of a joke.

I was posted back to Williamtown, where I had recently been a SNCO, an unusual state of affairs to say the least. It seemed that French-speaking, Mirage-trained ENGOs were at a premium and Williamtown needed as many as it could get. The unit I was posted to at Williamtown was - you guessed it - No 76 Squadron. Thank you, DPO!!
When I got back there, 76 was a little better manned and equipped than when I was last with it, but with the Darwin Detachment still sapping morale, it was not a happy unit. Finally, No 75 Squadron left for Butterworth in a blaze of glory, and obliquely we in 76 reaped the reward.

With all personnel and stores for Butterworth coming through Williamtown first for training/on-forwarding, at last we got to pick and choose first. We received good airmen, even better SNCOs, the pick of the training courses, a regular supply of spares in the quantity we needed them and gradually we pulled ourselves out of the mire.

Perhaps the best thing which happened to the Mirage business was that, in 1968, the Darwin Detachment ended. Henceforth, Mirages would deploy to Darwin several times a year for exercises, then return to Williamtown, just as we had done with the Sabres in the Indonesian Confrontation days. No 76 Squadron's disparate elements were finally

united after the best part of three years.

The day the Detachment officially ceased, the Squadron aircraft flew out from Darwin in pairs, with the last two deciding to quit the Darwin base in true fighter style. Loaded with fuel in "big jugs" for the flight to Townsville, the aircraft took off and came round for a run over the base - at tree-top level.

Swooping over the (pre-Tracey) headquarters building, they cracked in afterburner, rotated and climbed away to the south-east, leaving a trail of broken windows, leafless trees, angry staff officers and hysterical WRAAFs. The OC Darwin was distinctly not amused!

Fifteen minutes out, one of the aircraft developed hydraulic problems. There was nothing for it but for the pair of them to return to Darwin. Waiting for them on the tarmac was the WOFF Service Policeman, with a bevy of his men. With uncharacteristic tact, he politely informed the pilots that the OC would appreciate a few minutes of their time!

In the middle of 1968 I received another posting, this time to the newly re-formed No 3 Squadron, the first Mirage ground attack squadron, scheduled to go on to Malaysia when it became operational. It was to be the finest unit I ever served with in thirty years of PAF service.

No 3 Squadron was the oldest fighter squadron in the RAAF, with continuous service as such since 1916. In World War Two, it was the highest scoring Commonwealth fighter squadron. Only two RAF squadrons had shot down more enemy aircraft, both having the advantage of the Battle of Britain to do so.

Every ground officer except the SENGO (who was Academy) was an ex-SNCO or ex-WOFF. Two of us had been Mirage "originals" from France, Keith Sullivan being the other, both having been on Sabres at Williamtown and Butterworth before that. Every pilot was (I believe) hand-picked and many went on to Air Rank in the RAAF. The ground crews were the cream of the base. The whole unit just clicked together

beautifully.

The ground attack Mirage was different. The airframe was camouflaged, and its underwing hard points carried bomb racks instead of missiles, On the arrival of the first camouflaged Mirage, a chance comment by Major Andy Patten (USAF exchange at 2OCU}, likened it to a low flying lizard. We picked it up: the inspiration clicked and endured. The pilots arrived in Buttfrworth with a hissing, frill-necked lizard painted on their helmets and this emblem was later painted on the tail fin, our unofficial emblem embodying unflinching defiance and chameleon-like adaptability. The Squadron élan was wondrous to behold.

"Bloody Butterworth – Again"

On New Year's Day 1969, we got the order to move to Malaysia in six weeks, lock, stock, and barrel, an impossibly short time for such a task. But we did it (our EQUIPO, John Gildersleeve, on whom the bulk of the logistics task fell, was awarded a well-deserved MBE for it). The "Fast-Flying, Ferociously-Fighting, Furiously-Fornicating Fird" could do anything!

Transiting through Indonesia, we decided to show the Indonesians what a crack Australian fighter squadron could do. Being the first ground attack squadron we were the only recipients of the ground attack version of the Mirage and consequently all our aircraft numbers were sequential, from A3-81 to A3-100 inclusive, with our "Dual" being A3-107. We decided to stage them in strict numerical order through the Indonesian base we were using as a stepping stone.

Anyone who knows Mirages will realise that getting twenty-one of them off in strict numerical order, in a serviceable condition suitable for a long over-water flight, in little over an hour with no returns, and TWICE in one day, is little short of miraculous. We did it, in aircraft numerical order as well.

We "groundies", officers included, worked half the night before take-off from Darwin, making sure all was just so. The pilots were determined to fly the aircraft as long as they had wings and noise. I was nominated to be the squadron ENGO in charge of the ground crew left at Darwin to see them off and, as the designated "tail-end charlie", our CO Ted Radford made it plain that my hide was on the line if anything hiccupped.

Off the aircraft went under my watchful and very anxious eye. Along with our EQUIPO, I then haunted first the Control Tower and then the Darwin Comm Centre, until a message came through to say that they had all reached the Indonesian base safely - and in numerical order. Owing to a hard landing by one aircraft, there was a problem with one of its "jugs", the immediate resupply of which was organised by John Gildersleeve, but it wasn't needed. That aircraft was flown direct to Singapore without jugs, refuelled and flown on to Butterworth.

The Indonesians were bloody impressed. It's possibly an apocryphal story, but one of them actually asked the CO how we had managed to repaint the numbers in the air!

The last Squadron personnel to arrive at Butterworth, we landed there late that night in a C130. Despite the late hour, the CO and all the pilots plus the other ENGOS greeted us on the tarmac with celebratory beers. Keith Sullivan handed me mine with the sardonic phrase "Bloody Butterworth – again!"

In Malaysia we paired up with No 75 Squadron to fulfil Australia's commitments under the Five Power Defence Agreement (or FPDA), but we had hardly gotten our feet under the table at Butterworth when we all had to go to Tengah, on Singapore Island. The Butterworth strip was to be resurfaced. Now we knew what all the rush had been about. Great planning, we all thought.

Also, we started to hear the ugly word "Detachment" again. It seemed that a flight of Mirages was to be permanently detached to Tengah, to

provide the Singaporean air defence controllers with experience in the handling of Mirage aircraft.

Detachment! With clear and sharp memories of the infamous Darwin Detachment, the Squadron's officers and men looked at each other glumly, and chorused a short, entirely unmentionable word. However, 75 Squadron, who had set up both the initial Darwin and Tengah Detachments, had learnt the lessons of the Darwin experience well.

Personnel rotation was on a monthly, not two monthly basis. With both squadrons fully manned and with the single personnel only too delighted to extend their stays in Singapore, individual married squadron members would get a turn once a year unless unlucky. The domestic effect on the troops would be minimal. Also, the squadrons would man the Detachment in turn on a six monthly rotation basis, so the effect on squadron operations would also be minimal. Things didn't look too bad at all, and so they proved to be.

When the time came to vacate Butterworth, the plan was for the birds of both squadrons and their aircrews to fly down to Tengah, being recovered by the No 75 Squadron ground crews of the Detachment and an advance party from No 3 Squadron. The rest of the ground crews and the heavy equipment and vehicles were to go by ship, in two waves, one before and one after the aircraft left Butterworth. The CO called me up and told me that I would have the chore of being "tail-end charlie" again, this time for both squadrons.

Many people will remember the LSL Sir Galahad and its demise in Fitzroy Harbour during the Falklands War in 1982. In 1969 it was chartered to take the Butterworth Mirage squadrons to Singapore. Less the stay-behind team of one officer and thirty "groundies" drawn from both squadrons, the bulk of the ground crews boarded the Sir Galahad at the wharves at Prai south of Butterworth. Then, when they were on their way, we stay-behinds launched the aircraft to Singapore.

On the Sir Galahad's return in a couple of days, we RO-RO-ed most of the heavy ground support equipment (or GSE) and the vehicles aboard one afternoon, then boarded ourselves. After a passage down the glass-smooth Malacca Straits, thirty hours later in Victoria Dock,

Singapore, we RO-RO-ed them off again.

We were supposed to have been met by British Army drivers who were to drive us, our vehicles and GSE to Tengah. None of us were yet licensed to drive in Singapore and the Singaporean authorities were very finicky about strange military personnel driving around their streets. Also, we had no knowledge of Singapore or its road system.

When we docked it was night, there were no drivers and no accessible phone either. I remembered vaguely from my previous tour that Tengah was somewhere to the north-west of the island. It was a fine night with lots of stars. So we decided to take the initiative (and the risk) and drive ourselves to Tengah.

With me "navigating", heading as near north-west as I could judge from those stars and stopping to ask the way occasionally from anyone who didn't look like a policeman, about midnight we arrived at the Tengah base, to find No 3 Squadron asleep and No 75 Squadron in a state of shock. They had lost their CO that night when his Mirage flew into the sea off Singapore during a practice low-level night intercept.

Before ending this segment, I should like to make a comment about the squadron's wives and families. With our rather abrupt departure from Butterworth to Tengah, the task fell on them of receiving all our domestic goods and chattels shipped by sea up to Penang from Australia. On them also fell the tasks of recording and reporting breakages, missing items, assembling children's bikes and playing equipment, managing servants, enrolling children in school, finding out how and where to shop, plus all the minor embuggerances involved with any posting. But they had to do it in a strange land, where the political situation was fraught because of the immanence of federal elections.

Shortly after we got to Tengah with the squadron, as a result of those elections all hell broke loose in Malaysia. Although the ruling Pan

Malay Islamic Party retained government they lost considerable ground in many states, Penang being one of them. This resulted in riots of a particularly lethal kind, a situation the ladies also had to cope with. Strict curfew was imposed and the Penang domestic suburbs were patrolled by the Malaysian army, assisted by the Gurkhas. Anyone caught outdoors during curfew hours was shot without warning.

Not a good time for the wives to be without their husbands. The fact they all coped so well with these “above and beyond the call” situations eased the anxieties of those of us down in Singapore and contributed just as much to the squadron’s efficiency as our trade expertise. Well done, Mrs 3 Squadron!

Our RAF counterparts at Tengah were the renowned No 74 (Tiger) Squadron. This famous squadron, home to several "aces" and VCs in both World Wars, was currently flying the British Lightning fighter, one of the short-listed candidates for the Sabre replacement. Much interested, both pilots and "groundies" went to view "The Flying Drainpipe", as we rudely called it.

In their equivalent of the second line maintenance hangar, I watched with utter amazement as RAF fitters carried out an engine change. With just one of its two engines removed the aircraft resembled a piece of lace. With two removed there seemed to be nothing left of the fuselage at all.

Specially flanged and strengthened metal pipes had to be installed to hold the empennage to the forward fuselage and wings, even just for an engine roll-out, showing clearly that the engine was a vital part of airframe integrity. The thought of having to carry out an engine change on the Lightning at some out-of-the-way staging post with only "fly-away kit" facilities, made us shudder.

In true European style the Lightning's "legs" were even shorter than those of the Mirage. It could climb like a home-sick angel, but to go anywhere at all had to be festooned with "big jugs" even more

ponderous and less aerodynamic than ours. One and all, we silently blessed the rejection of the Lightning as the Sabre replacement.

In 1969, a detachment of No 3 Squadron Mirages flew to the Philippines for some trials with the USAF based at Clark Field. To get there and back we had to use an unusual route, with much international sensitivity at stake. We did that without the slightest problem and flew for ten days at Clark to boot. The serviceability standards we maintained and the broad-based, in-depth knowledge even the most junior of our airmen possessed had the USAF personnel amazed. Their trade system was such that only their SNCOs possessed a broad knowledge in their respective areas of expertise.

While at Clark we took the opportunity to have a good look at a Phantom, another candidate for Sabre replacement, and (I believe) the aircraft favoured by the RAAF. We checked its two engines, its fuel capacity and its air-to-air refuelling facility. We checked its on-board electronic equipment and nav-aids. We checked its ease of maintenance, in all respects. The consensus among us was that it was a better aircraft by far for both conditions and distances in Australia.

The Phantom's performance in ROLLING THUNDER, STEEL TIGER, TIGER HOUND and similar long-distance air interdiction/strike operations into North Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in the 1960s and early 1970s was proof of that. Many a battle-damaged and crippled Phantom, with one engine dead, made it back on the other to Thailand, South Vietnam, or its home Carrier in the South China Sea, having topped up holed and leaking fuel tanks as necessary from an airborne tanker. Neither of these eminently sensible options was available with the Mirage.

The Phantom looked huge when standing beside the Mirage, which in turn looked quite dainty in contrast. And that is how I remember the Mirage aircraft. A dainty lady forced to rough it in the GAFA.

I spent three years in Butterworth with Mirages, nominally as No 3

Squadron's OIC Aircraft Equipment Maintenance Flight, which was indeed part of my responsibility. In addition, I was OIC of the airframe "D" Servicing, or second line maintenance hangar, and the engine "P" Servicing workshop. As an ENGRAD, this was a considerable honour, as both these are strictly were strictly “black hand” and were normally the exclusive province of the ENGAEROs.

My colleague from France and the previous Butterworth tour, Keith Sullivan, who nominally filled the position of OIC Aircraft Maintenance Flight, was an ENGINST. His actual responsibility was for the flight line and the first line maintenance hangar, an even more ENGAERO-only province.

This state of affairs, anathema to the base's ENGAERO population, worked perfectly well for the Squadron. The Squadron SENGO, Al Emmerson, was an ex-Academy ENGAERO with two aeronautical engineering degrees, so Sully and my lack of detailed knowledge in matters aerodynamic was of little consequence. We were both Mirage-experienced from the ground up for the best part of a decade and we had some of the finest technical WOFFs and SNCOs in the RAAF to advise us.

I was fortunate to have an excellent WOFF ENG, Homer Parker, plus very capable "black-hand" SNCOs, among whom was “Bushy” Smith, and they taught me much. Not a bird left our hangar or an engine its test stand, but that I hadn't crawled through and over it personally in the company of these experts. For my own peace of mind (and my continuing education), I had to satisfy myself that nothing was amiss.

I may have been considered an "Aunt Fuss" for the way I ran things in the second line maintenance domain, but in the three years I was in Butterworth the Squadron did not lose an aircraft, nor even came close to it. That was the standard the aircrew expected and which we "groundies" set. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, No 3 Squadron was the best there was, top to bottom, in the RAAF.

The View from Command

All good things come to an end and, regretfully after some three and a half years, so did my time with No 3 Squadron. At the end of 1971, nearly ten years to the day when I had first been told about the Mirage program by the OC 86 Wing, I was posted from Butterworth to HQ Support Command in Melbourne. SUPCOM was its official acronym. Most of its unofficial ones are unprintable.

I never again served in a hands-on capacity with the Mirage aircraft, but for the next four years they were part of my overall responsibility in one way or another. I got to Williamtown and Butterworth occasionally on staff visits and enjoyed again the whining roar characteristic of the Atar engine and the smell of burnt aviation kerosene. But I was now a spectator, not a player.

The Mirage still gave me problems, however, and most of those related to the French.

My first job at SUPCOM was in Technical Spares Assessing and, in the course of my duties, my amazed eyes would see re-supply documents for Mirage electronic equipment and spare parts. Despite my previous experience in France and all the rumours of French "rip-offs", I hadn't quite grasped the nettle until I got to Support Command. Now all was laid bare.

To give one simple example, the Mirage fire control radar used as its pulsing heart a device known as a magnetron. These were made in France and the radar manufacturer refused initially, quite reasonably, to warrant radar performance unless that particular magnetron was used. That magnetron was very, very expensive, its failure rate was high and the price seemed to soar with each re-purchase.

As warranty periods ran out, we in TSA and AEENG cast around for something cheaper. An American company not only offered a much cheaper item, but at the same time one which offered both upgraded technology and a better mean time between failures. We conducted

exhaustive user trials, then gleefully switched. This came to the ears of the French magnetron manufacturer's local representative who was soon hot on the scene.

Why had we changed, he asked? We told him. Well, he replied, if that was all it was, he could supply the same technologically upgraded item as the Americans, but made by the French manufacturer, for the same price as the Americans charged.

We got the point immediately. If the RAAF was stupid enough to keep on paying huge prices for outdated technology, why should the Company rock the boat? The same thing occurred with tyres, hydraulic seals, and a host of other Mirage items. Gradually sanity prevailed and we weaned ourselves off French spares - where possible.

For the French the goose which laid the golden egg gradually stopped laying. I'm sure that they cried - all the way to the bank! However it comes out, if the wheat story had any credibility France bought some of the cheapest wheat and Australia the most expensive aircraft in the world.

In 1976 I was posted to the Department of Defence (Air Force Office) as it was known in those days, in Canberra. DEFAIR was its acronym. In Support Command and even at the "coal face", we preferred to call it DEAF EAR, DEFER, or DESPAIR! To us in the wider RAAF, nobody seemed to be doing anything there; nothing concrete about equipment and infrastructure replacement anyway.

One of my first tasks was to provide avionics input to - you guessed it - the recently formed fighter replacement program cell. (Ever heard of déja vu?). Then and only then was I able to experience at first hand some of the problems which the RAAF customarily faces with its re-equipment programs. I found that I was just a boy about to enter a man's world.

One question, in my opinion the crux of the problem, which was

never answered intelligently was this. Why is there one way of buying military items in peace-time and another in war?

Why, at a time of imminent hostilities (the purchase of the Phalanx close-in weapon system for the RAN frigates representing Australia in the Gulf War was a recent example), could weapons systems be purchased, fitted and be operational in a matter of weeks quite satisfactorily but, without such urgency, the process has to take literally the best part of half a decade.

Where there is a demonstrated and approved need, why not simplify things to utilise one way for all world situations, working on the sole basis that the quicker the items can get into the user's hands the more cost-effective they are to our country.

Many, many things which had puzzled me with the Mirage purchase now became blindingly clear. I grew up and mentally apologised often and sincerely to those I had maligned in the past for some of the apparent idiocies of the Mirage program. I had blamed the wrong people.

A "Groundie" Reflects

So how do I sum up my Mirage experience? With mixed emotions and several questions.

Was the Mirage an illusion as our multi-role interceptor/strike aircraft? As a nation with certain immutable geographic considerations, did we buy the right aircraft to cater for them? With our comparatively small numbers of aircraft and the vast Australian continent to defend, would the Mirage really have been a viable defender with its comparatively short "legs" and no air-to-air refuelling capability? Was the RAAF's operational requirement for a replacement for the Sabre really adversely impacted by a debt for wheat?

Some will argue that it was not for us at the RAAF "coal face" to pass judgement on the choice of our superiors. After all, we were only the

lowly minions who had to make that choice work! We could not possibly know all the facts taken into account in making that choice. Considerations above and beyond the pure needs of the RAAF must often predominate.

How many times have we heard such words before? What an excellent smoke-screen they make. The classic politician's cop-out. To hell with the man at the "coal face", be he pilot, infantry soldier or seaman gunner - just as long as the books balance and the electorate will vote favourably. For many, many years now I have been a devotee of the principal that, should war break out, the very first men and women in the enlistment queues must be the politicians who brought us to that war.

To speak in defence of the Mirage III O and its Australian dual-seat counterpart, the Mirage III D, they were magnificent aircraft for their time (the late 1950s and early 1960s) and ours were possibly the best versions of the Mirage III series in the world. The Mirage was no slouch in a climb, even without the booster rocket, and it had few vices not shared by all its delta-wing contemporaries.

The Mirage III in several versions, including Israel's home-grown variant the Kfir, was flown in combat by the Israeli Air Force in both the 1967 and 1973 wars, during the six year War of Attrition in between and over two succeeding turbulent decades. It didn't disgrace itself in either the air-to-air or air-to-ground roles.

However, Israel is a small country and, even in the Sinai, the airspace environment was that for which the Mirage had been designed; an environment where the problem of distance was one of trying NOT to intrude into neighbouring countries' air space. That was precisely the problem in Malaysia - trying not to intrude into Thai and Indonesian airspace, particularly the latter when flying south out of Singapore or west from Butterworth. In the relatively small area covered by the FPDA, the Mirage was in the airspace environment for which it had been designed.

In Australia, however, it was entirely another matter. The RAAF used Mirages as both interceptor and tactical strike aircraft where the problem of distance is just that - huge distance. The Mirages were simply not designed to cope with that kind of scenario.

Their "legs" were not long enough and they constantly had to be flown with the rocket bay tank and external fuel tanks fitted, mostly the "supersonics", but often with a sub-sonic 286 gallon centre-line tank, and mandatorily with two 374 gallon sub-sonic "big jugs" for transit. Even those were barely enough to transit safely from Townsville to Darwin in any sort of headwind. Their on-board navigation aids were a most unfortunate choice for a country with the sparse and widespread ground electronic infrastructure of the 1960s and 1970s.

I for one was very glad that we never had to put the Mirage to the ultimate test - air defence/tactical strike in a real shooting war over the vast Australian continent. But then, as a long succession of politicians of both political persuasions have told us, there was absolutely no chance of that. There is no foreseeable threat, is there!

Of some concern at times and possibly most expensively in view of the numbers of aircraft lost during the period of the auxiliary-take-off-drive shaft failures, the Mirage had only one engine. When that cut out in the middle of the GAFA or anywhere else, even within immediate range of a landing field, the pilot was in deep "kimche" if he disregarded his only legal course of action.

A No 76 Squadron pilot, the same one each time, managed on two occasions to land a Mirage "deadstick" when it ran out of “noise”; once on the abandoned war-time strip at Tomago near Williamtown and once on the Darwin strip. The second time, bringing that bird home in one piece enabled us to solve the take-off-drive failure problem which had hitherto eluded us and which had already caused the loss of several aircraft, one in Darwin harbour sometime before.

His reward for those magnificent feats of airmanship? Severe reprimand on both occasions for disobeying standing orders, which required a pilot to abandon the aircraft forthwith when he lost his engine and couldn't restart it. A review of the causes of Mirage losses shows that, in my opinion at least, a second engine may have saved upwards of ten aircraft, maybe even more, of the twenty to thirty or so the RAAF lost in the Mirage era.

Nevertheless, despite all the draw-backs we did make the choice work. I suppose we all could take a bow for a difficult job well done. I prefer to think that the simple word "professionalism" covers it better. We were professionals, all of us, and damned proud of that fact.

The RAAF used and got the best out of the Mirage despite its inherent problems, and flew it in both air defence and the airframe-stressing ground attack roles for fourteen years longer than the ten years the French told us they were designed to hold together as a pure interceptor. I personally think that that was little short of miraculous.

This feat, for such it was, was owing firstly to the dedication of the ground crews who worked like slaves to keep the aircraft serviceable and in peak condition, and secondly to the engineer officers and NCOs both in the squadrons and at Command level, who racked their brains to come up with innovative technical solutions for defects. In both these categories I include our civilian counterparts at Avalon, who carried out wing replacement, frame 26 and other major refurbishment programs

Finally, and not the least, they lasted owing to the skill and sheer ability of the pilots, who got the best out of the platform with minimum wear and tear. Their absolute trust in the ground crews' skill and care overcame any fears that, towards the end of its life-of-type, the Mirage could be a flying coffin. If there really is any such thing as "The Australian Mirage Achievement", then it is owing to that.

The latest fighter, the F/A 18, embodies most of the qualities

identified in this memoir as desirable if not essential for an all-round fighter aircraft suitable for Australia. This time the RAAF got the right bird, at least from my viewpoint as a tax-payer with a reasonable acquaintance of the fighter side of the RAAF. Maybe the purchase took so long (nearly 10 years) that the RAAF's needs finally emerged intact. Or maybe Australia found other ways to recover its export debts!

Vale Dictum

While posted at Williamtown I bought land at Port Stephens and eventually I retired to that beautiful spot. One afternoon, visiting that land with a plan to build on it, I heard a jet fighter flying over the Port. Looking up I saw the Dainty Lady. It was the last time I saw one flying in Australia, some twenty-four years after but in almost exactly the same place as I had seen the first one. The wheel had turned full circle.

Now the aircraft is merely a part of our military aviation history. Its annals gather dust in vaults and document storage facilities and young Australians look at it curiously on the static display at "Fighter World" with the same wonder they would exhibit for a dinosaur skeleton.

Now and again, like a doddering old general visiting an old battlefield, I take my grand-children to see it. I show them the little red squares of tape stuck onto the various modules of the fire control radar by me personally almost fifty years ago, to show that they had been modified for ground attack. Pathetic, isn't it?!

Most if not all of us who flew or serviced the Mirage are out to pasture ourselves now, with only memories of our long affaire with the dainty French lady. Like most affaires, some memories are good and some bad. Certainly that is the case with mine.

In the final analysis, perhaps the RAAF would have been better off with another aircraft, the Phantom for example, but without all the embuggerances we suffered the experience of learning about and operating it probably would not have been nearly as interesting.

Chapter 4

First Commanding Officer - Vance Drummond

Vance Drummond (1927-1967), air force officer, was born on 22 February 1927 at Hamilton, New Zealand, third of six children of Leonard Henry Vance Drummond, office manager, and his wife Dorothy Josephine May, née McKnight, both New Zealand born. Educated at Hamilton West Public and Te Awamutu District High schools, Vance left early to help his father farm. Leonard's four sons were all interested in flying; Fred, the eldest, was killed in 1941 while serving in the Royal Australian Air Force. In May 1944 Vance joined the Royal New Zealand Air Force. His training ended in September 1945 and in October he was demobilized as sergeant navigator.

In March 1946 Drummond enlisted in the New Zealand Military Forces. He was sent to Japan in July with 'J' Force and qualified as an interpreter. Back in New Zealand in October 1948, he left the army and applied to rejoin the R.N.Z.A.F., hoping to train as a fighter pilot. When he was rejected as being too old, he moved to Australia and was accepted by the R.A.A.F. on 29 August 1949.

Graduating top of his course as sergeant pilot in February 1951, Drummond was posted to No.78 Wing at Williamtown, New South Wales, and in August to No.77 Squadron in Korea with which he flew Gloster Meteor jets against superior Soviet-built MiG-15s. He was recommended for the American Air Medal (gazetted 1953) and commissioned on 30 November 1951. Next day his aircraft was shot down and he was captured by the North Koreans. On Good Friday, 1952, he and four companions escaped from Pinchon-ni prisoner-of-war camp, but all were recaptured and punished. Drummond was

repatriated in September 1953.

After completing courses in advanced navigation and fighter-combat instruction, in 1954 Drummond became an initial member of the R.A.A.F.'s Sabre Trials Flight at Williamtown. In St Peter's Anglican Church, Hamilton, Newcastle, on 9 September 1955 he married a law clerk Margaret Hope Buckham. He was posted to headquarters, Home (Operational) Command, Penrith, in 1959 and attended the R.A.A.F. Staff College, Canberra, in 1961.

By December Drummond was a flight commander in No.75 Squadron. He was promoted squadron leader in January 1962 and in October took charge of the unit's 'Black Diamonds' aerobatic team, the official R.A.A.F. squad. The team's Sabres became a familiar sight at functions around Australia. They gave displays at the Seventh British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Perth in November, the Royal Hobart Regatta, attended by Queen Elizabeth II, in February 1963 and in Port Moresby in June 1964 to celebrate the opening of Papua New Guinea's House of Assembly. Drummond was awarded the Air Force Cross (1965) for his work in No.75 Squadron and his leadership of the 'Black Diamonds'.

From December 1964 he carried out staff duties at the Department of Air, Canberra. Twelve months later he was promoted acting wing commander (substantive January 1967) and sent to the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) where he was attached to the United States Air Force. On 8 July 1966 he joined the 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron as a forward air controller. He flew in a Cessna 0-1 'Bird Dog', a two-seat observation aircraft, nicknamed 'Snoopy'.

On the night of 24-25 July Drummond and his American pilot went to the aid of an army company which was surrounded by troops of the People's Liberation Armed Forces (Viet Cong). Despite heavy anti-aircraft fire, they kept low, dropping flares, illuminating enemy positions, and calling up support from fighter-bombers and helicopter-gunships. They flew for a total of eleven hours in four

sorties, in addition to the five hours which they had flown in daylight on the 24th. By dawn on the 25th the soldiers had been saved. Drummond was to be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. For similar work on 27 October, he won the Republic of Vietnam's Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star. He flew a total of 381 operational missions and set a high standard for Australian F.A.C.s who followed him.

Returning home, on 20 February 1967 Drummond assumed command of No.3 Squadron at Williamtown. On 17 May that year he and three other pilots were engaged in training exercises off the New South Wales coast. At 4.20 p.m., about 50 miles (80 km) north-east of Newcastle, his Mirage went into a dive and plummeted into the sea. Neither his body nor the aircraft was recovered. Margaret took their only child, 9-year-old David, to Government House, Canberra, to receive Vance's D.F.C. on 5 April 1968.

Chapter 5

No 3 Squadron with Mirage

Recollections - JW Newham

I had served as Flight Commander with No 3 Squadron October 1957 until October 1960 at both Williamtown and Butterworth during which time I became acquainted with the rich history of the squadron, and met many of the distinguished old boys. Our WOE during this time was Ernie Harkness who'd deployed to the Middle East with No3 in 1940; he was very proud of the significance of his second overseas deployment. So we were very much aware of the standard we had to match.

At the beginning of 1967 replacement of Sabres with Mirage in the RAAF was well underway: technicians and pilots had been trained in France; No2 OCU had been conducting conversion courses for two years, with Nos 76 and 75 Squadrons established and operating with the air defence version of the Mirage. The pilot conversion course was expanded to include operation of the ground attack version of the Mirage.

The stage was thus prepared for the reformation of 3 Squadron. Remaining Sabres at Butterworth were flown back to Williamtown and flying temporarily ceased. Pilots and technicians were under training, aircraft and ground support equipment in the pipeline, personnel and equipment establishment tables were close to maturity, tarmac space, hangers and administrative buildings allocated.

Wing Commander Vance Drummond had been posted as Commanding Officer; it was a blow when he was lost on a training exercise in May 1967. SDNLDR Ted Radford, then completing his Mirage conversion, was appointed temporary commander. Shortly afterwards I

was selected to fill the post; then serving as CFI of the OCU and having completed Mirage conversion and operational training, I was an economical solution.

Posted to 3 Squadron mid July 1967. Empty crew room, admin building and tarmac; hanger also but for some GSE. Sergeant Dean was first technician posted in; he set about fitting out records office and tentatively assigning hangar space. Inherited one thin file " Formation of 3 Squadron with Mirage".

What followed was a flurry of inward postings, site preparations and GSE servicing. Met with various base executives: OC, Base AdminO, CO Base Squadron, CO 481 Maintenance Squadron etc, all of whom had a responsibility in the squadron's growth. On-going liaison with the maintenance squadron was a necessity as the squadron grew; this was taken over by 3 Sqn EngO day to day. Co-operation was first class and we were particularly fortunate to get top officers and NCOs throughout.

The first batch of pilots to complete training included A Flight Commander SQNLDR Ted Radford, and flight commanders FLTLTs Ron Johnson and Bob Walsh. FLGOFF Keith Sullivan took up the engineering leadership until arrival of FLTLT Emmerson, I think in January 1968. Warrant Officers Darkie Clark and Homer Parker, and FSGT Ted Plant were most welcome, very experienced and best the RAAF had to offer. FLGOFF Quirk (radio) arrived later, along with FLGOFF Gildersleeve Equipment. Our good fortune held: the vital Radar Riley post was filled by Blue Farrell. I'm uncertain about timings of other officers and senior NCOs, all essential to operations. I confess to being chuffed about approaches from technicians who's served with No3 in Butterworth to swap from other squadrons, and delighted this was able to be arranged, helped along by SQNLDR Dinny O'Brien, who looked after technical manning within the Wing. Tom McClelland and Wally Tierney are two who stick in my memory. Accordingly most of the build up initiatives required little or no input from me; they got on with the job spontaneously and enthusiastically.

I picked up our first Mirage A3-52 from Avalon 27 Jul 1967; build up

was quick; operational training started immediately.

In the beginning I'd received no briefing on how to go about the build up task so that the squadron was capable of performing its assigned tasks. Just what this entailed was specified broadly in ASD 235, rates of effort and deployment scope and sustainability in AAP 208 (Wartime) and AAP 171 (Peacetime). These publications became our Bibles.

A new feature: To facilitate maintenance whilst deployed we were established with air transportable cabins, adequate but rather flimsy workshops. Although second line maintenance at Williamtown was conducted by the maintenance squadron, it became apparent when we examined our mobility plans that the squadron maintainers would have to fit-out and commission these cabins and perform repairs and routine maintenance within the squadron whilst on home ground. This aspect required consultation with 481 (M) Squadron. Fortunately the CO GPCAPT Cumming cooperated enthusiastically and after a short breaking in period No3 was able to operate independently whilst deployed.

You asked about my input. Well, that is about it: the team was so experienced and keen that deployment plans and loading arrangements got underway from the beginning. C130 floor plans were inscribed on the hangar floors and set loading patterns developed and colour coded to facilitate efficient departures.

Our training focused on the stated roles of the squadron: primarily ground attack and reconnaissance, with a requirement to maintain a high skill level in air defence. I believe this was achieved within the period the squadron took to reach mature strength. We had achieved operational readiness in time for Exercise Hi Jupitor, June 1968, putting aside considerations of war stock weaponry.

We deployed the whole squadron, 22 Mirages, to Tindal for the exercise which I regarded as a test of our readiness: operate the squadron in its primary role, and test the air defences of Darwin.

We applied our thinking to these aims and planned long range operations day and night throughout the period of the exercise, around the clock. This entailed examination of the ground and air defences we sought to test and deceive. To this end exercise reports were examined and deficiencies noted; and on the necessity to husband assets we examined parameters of radars and ground based weapons, Bloodhound and Rapier. e.g. SQNLDR Radford visited Army's School of Artillery, and we showed a friendly interest in 30Sqn ops as a guide for remaining outside the envelopes of ground based weapons. I believe we did well and certainly made exercise staff sit up and take notice.

We flew 108 missions in 4 days, with long range tanks, and did what was asked of us. Young pilots became experienced pilots in eerie conditions in the black of night without peripheral visual cues. I was proud of them: they, and the team that put us in the air made Hi Jupitor a success.

I recall my focus for the last few months of my tenure was general oversight of continuation training and preparations for the expansion into photo recce capability. My records show several visits to HQOC and DEPAIR.

In October 1968 we received notice of the squadron's deployment to Butterworth. Having had four years at Williamtown I was posted to Department of Air, handing over command to SQNLDR Ted Radford on his promotion. No 3 Squadron was in good hands.

Thus ended the most satisfying posting of my career. It was an honour to be along for the ride. I'm sorry, that in my 88th year I'm not able to remember names of so many friends, who not only made No 3 Squadron work, but excel.

Addendum by Ted Radford:

Although the CO Jake Newham had an excellent group of officers and outstanding Senior NCOs, he commanded the squadron during a very

critical stage of its development and exerted just the right balance between strict guidance and allowing those under him the freedom to do their job. Undoubtedly, he was an inspiration, showing exceptional leadership, which later, of course, led to him being chosen as Chief of the Air Staff (CAS).

Photos of the Time

The photo above shows the pilots on that first day who are from left to right:

Marty Susans, Barry Schultz, Roger Wilson, the CO, Jake Newham, Bob Walsh, Ted Radford and Dick Kelloway. They are all wearing "Jaffa Orange" flying suits, this being 3 Sqn's official colour, dating from its time in the Middle East in WWII.

Chapter 6

Administrative Thoughts

Bill Farrell

GO!!!! At last the word the Squadron had been waiting for finally arrived. 3SQN was being deployed to RAAF Butterworth Malaysia with effect from 17 Feb 69.

The year of training, exercises out of RAAF Tindal, RAAF Darwin, RAAF Townsville, the replacement of existing Mirage Aircraft by the then recently modified Mirage, with ground mapping radar, extra fuel, and camouflaged in our favourite lizard livery, straight from the Government Aircraft Factory at Avalon Airport, had come to an end. However, the workload for the administrative personnel was about to increase significantly.

Besides being responsible for the administrative aspects of the day to day functions of the squadron which included persons being promoted, going on leave, being posted in and out, handling of daily correspondence, issuing routine orders and personnel occurrence reports (PORS) etc., the orderly room and its staff were given the extra burden of organizing the administrative aspects of the deployment.

A meeting with the staff, concluded, as much as possible would be done during normal working hours. This meant that in addition to the normal day workings, each member of the squadron, including those who were posted in but hadn't physically arrived, had to be interviewed regarding supplying lists for putting personal effects and furniture into storage. This included both married and single personnel. In addition, it had to be ascertained whether the single members were going to get married or not.

It was also decided that we would need extra help to accomplish the task. A request for a couple of additional clerks, in conjunction with the Adjutant (Flg Off Peter Harrison) fell on deaf ears. However a temporary typist was supplied. When this decision was made it was decided that the only way to meet deadlines would be to work from 6pm to 11.30pm each week night.

This arrangement worked well. It allowed the orderly room to function normally with the day to day problems and additionally liasing with Government Departments, interviewing personnel etc. After hours was spent organizing the paperwork - putting together copies of removal lists, filling out applications for passports and removal, so that everything would be ready for personnel to sign the next day, obtain the Commanding Officer's signature where required; sometimes this was difficult because the CO was immersed with operation orders etc., and overseeing the status of the squadron for deployment. However we managed.

The task of securing lists of items for storage, on forwarding to Malaysia and application for removal proceeded smoothly and credit has to be given to all personnel for their cooperation with orderly room staff. However when organizing passports, it was a different matter.

All personnel leaving Australia were required to be in possession of a passport. This was fine for the married personnel and quite a few of the single members. However for those people who planned to get married and take their wives to Malaysia it was a different matter.

There was a short time period from when the squadron was authorised to deploy to the actual date of deployment, and time was getting shorter. Those persons who would like to get married had to propose marriage, obtain a favourable reply, help organise the wedding (if a favourable reply was received) and also continue their normal duties.

I must state that the Department of Foreign Affairs; through their

Sydney office, basically bent over backwards to ensure that those persons who required passports received them without undue delay. For married applicants - simple; single applicants - simple. However those getting married was another matter. I quickly learned that liasing and having a sound cordial relationship with the Immigration Sydney office was paramount.

Basically the procedure for obtaining a passport for those persons who planned to get married was:
"an application from the groom in his name, an application from the bride in her maiden name and an application in her married name". These applications, together with applicable photos were dispatched to Department of Immigration Office, Sydney.

From here on liasing with Immigration Sydney was paramount to ensure success. Weekly updates as to status of wedding arrangements etc., were vital.

A day or two prior to the wedding, Immigration Sydney Office was verbally confirmed giving the date of the wedding, place of the wedding, time of the wedding and name of the Best Man. Immigration Sydney ensured that a representative from their office was present to hand over the passports to the Best Man on the production of the Wedding Certificate. On occasions the immigration representative met the newly married couple at the movement control office at the railway station in capital city in the State of their marriage. I also hazily remember sometimes the marriage celebrant handing over the passports together with the marriage certificate. I doubt that this cooperation would happen today.

I happened to be in the Adjutant's office (Flg Off Peter Harrison), a few weeks after the deployment had been announced and he mentioned in passing, that he had ordered three Boeing 707's to transport the remaining members and the dependants to Butterworth, and that each seated 160 persons. I returned to my office and got to thinking that the squadron didn't have enough people and their dependants to fill

two let alone three. I checked my lists and discovered we would be flat-out filling two 707's and certainly not three.

I went back to Flg Off Harrison and asked him how he had arrived at the figure that would require three Boeing 707's. He stated that the Plt Off at movement control said they used the formula that the average family consisted of 2.5 persons; so 2.5 x 197 = 492, requiring 3 x 707's. Therefore I pointed out to him that we had 22 pilots flying the aircraft, 70-80 accompanying the aircraft via Hercules aircraft and a handful already in Butterworth. Therefore, by his own formula we could not fill two 707's let alone three.

Suddenly the ramifications of what this meant if I was right, hit him. He called in the WOD, Chris Cross and asked him to check my calculations. A couple of hours later the WOD confirmed that we would be flat out filling two 707's - so one 707 was cancelled. I later heard rumours that this cancellation caused a few problems. I must point out that I cannot guarantee the seating capacity of the 707 is accurate or the formula for the family is also accurate, but the events - the ordering of 3 x 707's, the numbers travelling on said 707, WOD checking, cancellation of one 707 etc., did happen. To my knowledge this was the only hiccup in the administration of the deployment.

Arriving at Butterworth I acquired a Cpl CLKA left over from the previous occupants. I was starting to get things organized (allowances etc.,) when I was informed that I would be accompanying the squadron to RAF Tengah as administrator and WOD. Why this decision was made I still cannot understand the reasoning, seeing that a fair amount of paperwork etc., was still required to ensure the smooth bedding in of the squadron in Butterworth. Maybe it was thought that the Cpl, being familiar with the administration requirements, would be able to successfully carry out the tasks. How wrong this was. Soon after arriving at RAF Tengah, the ground crew, some NCO'S and Officers were complaining that their pay was inconsistent, up and down like a yo-yo. I informed the CO about the situation and the fact that there was a bit of unrest with the problem and a decision was made that I go

back to Butterworth to fix the problem.

I hitched a ride on the Dakota back to Butterworth and next day met with the SNCO in charge of Pay Section and asked his advice on how to fix the situation. I went back to my orderly room, reported to the Adjutant that I was back to fix the problems. Following the advice given to me by SNCO in charge of Pay Section, I issued three or four POR'S. This fixed the problems and I went back to RAF Tengah and remained until the squadron returned to Butterworth

Chapter 7

Operation Thoroughfare - Logistics

John Gildersleeve

I was a brand new Pilot Officer, Equipment Branch, having recently being commissioned from a Flight Sergeant Clerk Equipment. On my Equipment Training Course at 1 Stores Depot we were allowed to nominate where we would like to be posted on graduation, I nominated No 3 Squadron, with the knowledge (from my time at Dep Air) that 3 Sqn was to deploy to Butterworth in the near future and I wanted to return to the Base that I had had a hand in taking over from the RAF in 1958. In March of that year I was a Corporal member of the advance party that flew from Amberly in a RAF Hastings to Changi spending a weekend in Darwin and a then a few days rest at Changi waiting for the RNZAF weekly courier take us to Butterworth. Here I was ten years later with my dream come true posted to 3 Squadron to go to Butterworth.

When I arrived at Williamtown I was immediately sent to Richmond to learn how to plan and load cargo aircraft, so it was a couple of months away from home during the week but back home for the weekends.

Having completed this training, I returned to Williamtown and started to familiarise myself with the squadron's equipment and try to work out what we would have to take with us, what would be at Butterworth for us and therefore what we would leave behind. I was assisted very much by my own crew, a Sgt Clerk E, a Cpl and a couple of LAC Equipment Assistants. But much needed advice came from the Engineers of the Sqn, Al Emerson, Tony Mumford, Keith Sullivan and Dave Penna. The questions were what was at Butterworth, what had to be flown with the squadron on deployment and what would be

shipped on a cargo vessel.

While this planning was going on the normal role of the Sqn was a priority. We did training deployments to Darwin flying via Townsville with two or three Hercules which were loaded with the required ground equipment, spare parts plus personnel and their baggage. This is where my training course paid off and on our first deployment I realised how important it was to know exactly where items were packed and how easy it had to be to access them. Our first task after the first deployment was to convert our boxes from top to side loading so we could stack them on trolleys (that we had to take anyway) and then load the trolleys onto the Hercules in a manner that we could remove parts without having to unload the Hercules, good lesson learnt because of the reloading time that would have been required.

Having worked out what was going by sea (bear in mind that container shipping was not available in 1968) I explored Willie to find a storage site for the timber that would be required to make the crates and cases required for the shipping. Found a vacant hangar on the other side of the strip and received permission to use the site. Next was the sums to work out how much, how big and how easy to use. I think, I sought and received advice from the Barracks Store carpenter to answer the questions. Then the Base Squadron Equipment personnel received my required list and ordered the goods which were delivered and unloaded and put into the hangar where it sat for month after month after month. Reason for the delay was the Indonesian military action being taken against Malaysia and as the Mirages had to refuel between Darwin and Butterworth we needed access to an Indonesian base for transit purpose.

Meanwhile it was life as normal, off to Darwin and other places for exercises. I think is was about October or November when the word came through that we were being cleared to use the Indonesian base for refuelling purposes on Chinese New Year day in February. Ted Radford then took me to a conference at DEPAIR so we could make known what we required.

The week after the conference about six carpenters arrived on attachment from all around the country, their role was to build the cases and crates so we could pack the goods for shipment by sea. I was also in touch with old colleagues I had worked with five years previously at Movement Control Sydney. Cannot remember the name of the civilian who had been in charge of cargo movement in Sydney forever, and he did a tremendous job for us. I briefed him on sizes, estimated weights and quantity and he then found a ship sailing from Newcastle to Penang in early December. It was all hands at the wheel to get the packing done.

Everyone in the Sqn jumped in and helped where they could and I was in discussion with Base Sqn transport about the vehicles we would need from Williamtown to the wharf in Newcastle. This was prior to the bridge in Newcastle so it was going to be a long trip for every load. We hopped in and got packed and loaded with list after list of what was in what, with each box being coded. MOVCON Sydney had come up to help with the sorting of the boxes and crates to ensure they were carried to the wharf in the correct sequence for loading onto the ship for their journey to Penang. The voyage took about four weeks. I am not sure who looked after the unloading at Penang and transport to Butterworth but I am pretty sure nothing was lost or damaged on the way. Good packing job, thanks very much to the many hands involved

Said goodbye to the carpenters with a couple of beers and much thanks for their hard and very successful work.

Should have been feet up time as Christmas was approaching but no, it was time to plan the Hercules loads for the deployment. We had 21 aircraft going the full route with three backup ones doing the run to Darwin just in case of a failure of one of ours. First time we had deployed so many aircraft one after the other with three stop over spots, luckily Darwin was an overnight stay. Not sure how many Hercules we sent to Townsville to feed through the deploying aircraft but I think we loaded them the previous afternoon and the passengers

boarded in the early morning for take-off a few hours before the Mirages. At least one Hercules left about the same time, direct to Darwin to bring the Mirages in after their Townsville stop-over. Luckily, we had help at Williamtown and Darwin from the other Mirage Squadrons. I think I flew on the Townsville bound Hercules to be there if access was needed into the spares or tools and test equipment during the stop-over. Every thing went to plan with the aircraft leaving on time again in number sequence. We then reloaded the Hercules and took off for Darwin arriving well after the Mirages.

After a night lay-over in Darwin it was an early start again for the staging Hercules bound for Djuanda and Butterworth to receive the transiting Mirages. I was staying in Darwin as I had to obey the wishes of the OC of Williamtown and return to organise the clean-up of the facilities we had used. However, it was fingers crossed in Darwin waiting for the good news that all aircraft had cleared Djuanda for Butterworth. But that news did not come, instead we received a request for a pair of replacement tanks because of scraping on landing discovered during refuelling when the fuel leaked onto the tarmac. Apparently, the grass was so high the landing aircraft were not fully visible to the tower which was temporarily manned by RAAF traffic control personnel.

The call was made to the spare aircraft, which were flying to empty the long-range tanks before replacement with the standard ones before normal exercises were conducted. One of the aircraft dumped the remaining fuel and returned and the tanks were removed given a quick clean and strapped into a Hercules which took off within about an hour of the call. However, a call then came in saying that the tanks were not required as the Mirage had taken-off for Singapore after its ability to fly the distance on its internal tanks was calculated. I think the damaged tanks were left in Djuanda.

I then returned to Williamtown where I contributed a small amount of assistance with the deployment of the families on charted Qantas Boing 707's that flew from Williamtown to Butterworth. My main task was

ensuring that all of the remaining equipment was returned to the stores and that the buildings were cleaned and left in an immaculate condition. I vaguely recall inspections that were carried out and we given a clean bill of health.

My last task was my own and family deployment via Sydney and Singapore. Movement Control Sydney looked after the travel and accommodation bookings for us. However, my time at Sydney airport was taken up drinking with my previous boss from my day at MOVCON. I think I slept all the way to Darwin. After landing in Singapore we proceeded into a hotel for our overnight stay before last leg of the journey to Penang. Whilst checking-in an unexpected group from 3 Squadron, who just happened to be in Tengah on exercises, showed up to welcome us to Asia, guess what, after a few more hours of drinks I headed off to join the family in bedtime as it was an early start the next morning.

The most memorable part of my 3 Squadron posting was 1 January 1970, sound asleep about 0830 after a boozy night in the mess and at Radio RAAF Butterworth. Una woke me with a telegram in her hand. Looked at the addressee and noticed the initials M.B.E. (which stood for Member of the British Empire) behind my name. Opened the envelope and it was from the Governor General congratulating me on my very special award, all I could do was hug Una and cry. However, I got up, showered and dressed and then jumped in the car and raced up to the married quarters on the base to thank Wing Commander Radford for the award was just so thrilled to be selected for the award.

Chapter 8

Operation Thoroughfare

Ted Radford

General Comments

At the outset, I would like to make some general comments on my philosophy regarding the running of RAAF units and these are as follows:

Firstly, of course, the commissioned officers need to exert leadership and generate respect in the day to day running of their units;

Secondly, they also need to run what one may call a "tight ship";

Thirdly and most importantly, the success of the majority of RAAF units, particularly flying squadrons, depends to a very large degree on having excellent Senior NCOs; and

Fourthly, this was very much the case with 3 Squadron - we were indeed especially fortunate in having a group of such high quality Senior NCOs, including those we inherited from 75 Squadron when we got to Butterworth.

Regarding this fourth point, I well remember getting this group of so-called "discards" from 75 Squadron, telling them that as far as 3 Sqn was concerned, they had a clean sheet and would all be judged on their merits and their performance at "The Fighting Third": indeed, we were the premiere fighter squadron with a magnificent and very proud history dating back to September 1916 and we would be counting on them to help us to add to this fine record.

The Operation Itself - 14 to 17 February 1969

With the posting out of the current CO, Jake Newham, I was posted to be the new CO with the acting rank of Wing Commander (Wg Cdr) on 11Oct68, which was the beginning of probably my most satisfying and enjoyable two years of my many years in the Air Force and perhaps my entire varied career. Indeed, one of the very satisfying events for me was being responsible for the deployment of the Squadron to the base at RAAF Butterworth. The route of what was called "Operation Thoroughfare" was RAAF Townsville, RAAF Darwin, Djuanda, which was an Indonesion Navy base and finally Butterworth. This involved not only the flying of the 21 aircraft to Butterworth together with their support equipment but the positioning of turnround crews at Townsville, Darwin and Djuanda in Indonesia.

The picture at left shows the line up of aircraft at Williamtown in sequence on 14 Feb 69.

It also involved operational control of the C130 support plus removal of all the families and their dependants. Being an independent squadron, this numbered some 230 personnel, taking into account both aircrew and groundcrew plus other support personnel, with families boosting this number to about 800 total and this is where our high quality Senior NCOs came to the fore. For example, our Administrative Officer (Admin O), Peter Harrison, together with our Equipment Officer, John Gildersleeve had an enormous amount of work to do but both were very ably assisted by exceptional Senior NCOs, in Peter Harrison's case, he had "Blue" Farrell who was a tower of strength for him and highly capable. And I will remember to the day I die, the wonderful Warrant Officer in charge of the flight line, "Darky" Clark, and in whose

opinion, I would put my life and did so on many occasions. We also had another excellent Warrant Officer, "Homer" Parker, in charge of the 'D' inspection hangar. I insisted, amongst other things, that we prepared all squadron aircraft and that these should be flown in sequence, without exception, from 81 to 100 plus the dual, of course which was 107. Thanks to our marvellous team of engineers, under Al Emmerson, including wonderful officers, outstanding senior NCOs and great airmen, this was achieved.

To allow for penetration of cloud, the 21 aircraft were deployed in seven sections of three with three spares going as far as Darwin. The first drama was at Darwin where the Officer Commanding (OC) the base, Gp Capt Mick Mather, had ordered the 76 Squadron Flight deployed there to fly a complete flying program with all aircraft committed. This was in spite of the fact that they were there expressly to help our skeleton crew to turnround the whole of 3 Squadron and fix any unserviceabilities, and to do so we also needed their ground support equipment. Sqn Ldr Stewart Bach was the flight commander in charge but, understandably, refused to disobey the OC's order. So I and Stew Bach went to see the OC to reason with him but he refused to back-down. Therefore, I was given no other choice but to threaten to ring the AOC Operational Command to force him to back-down, which he did but I was conscious of the fact this made him an enemy for the rest of my career.

The photo at the right shows the deployment team of 24 pilots at RAAF Darwin on 17 Feb 69.

However, there was an even worse drama at Djuanda when a pilot, who shall remain nameless, holed both his big ferry tanks on landing

but this was not discovered until his aircraft was being refueled. The briefing was each section of three, approaching Djuanda, would use their ground mapping radar and the portable Tacan to space themselves well short of the runway, which would be apparent on their radar. The errant pilot's excuse was that there were MIG 21s parked in Operational Readiness Platform (ORP) and this distracted him to the extent that he was slow on landing thereby scraping his tanks. Having operational control of the support C130, I immediately asked the detachment commander, Flg Off Keith Sullivan, to 'scramble' the Herc with two spare tanks, while Dave Bowden, the Squadron's Navigation Officer, worked out whether a clean Mirage had enough fuel to safely reach RAF Tengah on Singapore.

The answer was that it could but to give a better safety margin, the clean aircraft was towed down to the end of the runway and; of course, the scrambled Herc was cancelled. The nameless pilot was replaced by Sqn Ldr Bob Walsh, the Squadron's B Flight Commander, for the individual flight to Tengah. I organised with Bob Walsh, that before his Point of No Return (PNR), I would call him to confirm that Tengah was clear with no thunderstorms threatening. However, although Tengah was clear when I overflew it and made the pre-arranged call telling him it was clear and to continue, Bob had to land in the rain as if to prove again how quickly weather in the tropics can change. Bob being an excellent pilot, of course, landed safely but was caught at Tengah without a replacement drag-chute. I received a plaintiff phone call from Tengah requesting me to authorise him to fly to Butterworth without a drag-chute which I did without question, recognising the skilled and experienced pilot that he was. I also askd the offending pilot to pick up Bob in the crew van when he arrived at Butterworth and later further tasked him to prepare a history of 3 Squadron, with slides, to brief all new arrivals in groups in order to convince them that they had joined a very illustrious squadron, which they should not let down in any way.

The photo at the right shows the welcome banner at Butterworth

The picture at the left was set up after Bob arrived, who is third from the right, with as many pilots who wanted to make themselves available on the spur of the moment.

Finally, I would like to thank each and everyone who was in 3 Squadron at the time, for what was a truly outstanding "Operation Thoroughfare", getting all aircraft through Djuanda in particular and to Butterworth on schedule. Unfortunately, all three Flight Commanders, Ron Johnson, Bob Walsh and Dave Owens have all now passed away and Al Emmerson, the Engineering Officer, has health problems and is not in good shape. In addition, I have no idea what has happened to many of our outstanding senior NCOs, men like 'Darky' Clark and others such as Flt Sgt Ted Plant have had outstanding careers. Of course, we do have 'Blue' Farrell, who not only was an outstanding orderly room Sergeant at the time of Operation Thoroughfare but is also using his

administration experience to very competently run the 50 year anniversary of our arrival in Butterworth on 17 February 1969. I would hope that all who are able will attend this anniversary on 17 February 2019.

Chapter 9

The Tengah Story

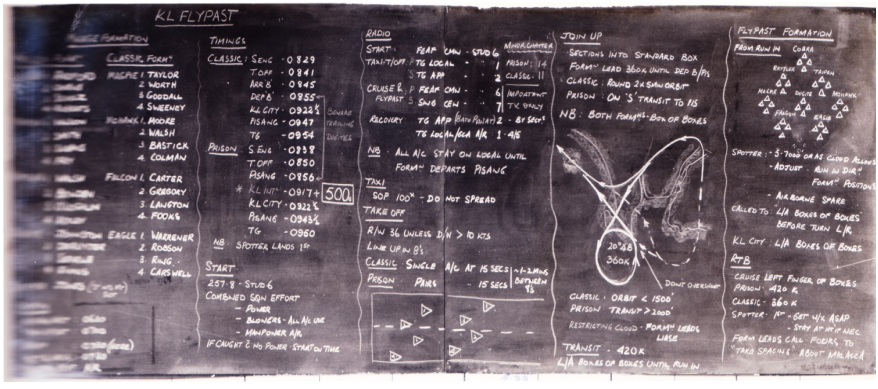
Ted Radford

I honestly cannot recall when 3 Squadron (Sqn) deployed to RAF Tengah because of the need to refurbish the Butterworth north-south runway but my logbook shows I visited the Tengah base on 21 Feb 69 down and back, which was just four days after our arrival at Butterworth. However, as my wife Jean was very heavily pregnant (if that is the way to describe it) it was unlikely that I would not want to help her settle into our on-base married quarter and decide on our cook and amah etc. I also flew down and back on 10 Mar 69 so I would surmise that 21 Feb was just a recce to look at hangars and aircraft parking etc., and introduce myself to the RAF Officer Commanding (OC), and that 3 Sqn deployed down on 10 Mar.

Very unfortunately the relatively new CO of 75 Sqn Wg Cdr Edward John Myers (Johny to all) was killed in A3-37 on a low level night intercept sortie over water on 18 Mar 69. It was always a mystery as to why he may have flown into the water, because there was no emergency radio call but the popular version was he may have locked onto a fishing boat or a fish trap of wood and metal, rather than the target aircraft, and, being a dark night, followed sight orders thus flying into the sea. I actually deployed down on 20 Mar, not wanting to leave the squadron leaderless in the circumstances. I also took the OC Tengah, Gp Capt Lagesen, for an area recce and Changi diversion, in our squadron dual Mirage, A3-107, on 24 Mar. I cannot recall on which occasion it was but I remember clearly he said that he would fully back me on my first mistake but on the second I would be on my own - fortunately I did not make any.

Probably the most significant event was the King of Malaysia birthday flypast on 5 Apr 69 in involving both squadrons and a total of 32 aircraft plus spares and a spotter to make sure the formation was correct as briefed. Because I had never led a flypast of 32 aircraft, I insisted we had a full practice two days beforehand on 3 Apr. On the day itself, I recall we got a call when the whole formation was on the run-in, on the run-in radio, to delay something like a few minutes. Having told them we had no other choice but to continue, I called to the formation, "sky hooks go", which I was told later created quite a few smiles.

The photo below is of the briefing board and is as delivered on the day. I am sorry about the blurred left side, as I had to scan a copy from my log book without detaching the glued photograph.



As you can see from the above briefing, the 75 Sqn box formations were being led by the acting CO, Sqn Ldr Al Taylor, because Wg Cdr 'Tex' Watson, who was the replacement for Johny Myers, had not arrived at that stage.

During my time at Tengah I did not normally go on the Dakota at the weekends, leaving that to the troops, so I got to know Wg Cdr Eric Bennett exceedingly well, who was the Air Staff Officer in Tengah

Headquarters. He owned a yellow Lamborghini, which he explained was given to him by the King of Jordan for his efforts in setting up the Jordanian Air Force. He also said the King had given him a unit in Mayfair with all costs paid and invited me to use it any time I was in London but did not ever take-up the offer. We spent many weekends driving in and out of Singapore city and it was amazing to see how the locals had learnt to keep out of the yellow Lamborghini's way. He gave me a drive of it and kept telling me to drive faster but I remained very circumspect for fear of hitting a local.

I do not know the formal reason why I was chosen to be Chairman of the Board of Inquiry for the crash of a Lightning, of 74 Squadron at RAF Tengah. However, I understand that the base OC and Sqn CO wanted a fighter pilot to chair the Board and, being in country already, I was the obvious choice. In addition, I understand that this is the only occasion of a RAAF Officer chairing a RAF Board of Inquiry. Moreover, even though the crash happened on 27 Jul 70, it is all part of the Tengah story, so I have decided to deal with it now.

The pilot was Flt Lt Frank Whitehouse, who was attempting, for a photographer (please excuse the language but there is no other way to describe it) what was known as a "shit-hot take-off" but his Lightning F6 (XS930) was carrying a full ventral tank of fuel. He had been taught on the RAF Operational Conversion Unit (OCU), confirmed by his Flight Commander, but then in a clean Lightning, to push the engine throttles to full after burner, release the brakes, pull the control column fully back into his stomach and as the aircraft climbed away, stop the rotation when the vertical was reached. Unfortunately for Frank, the aircraft stalled, auto-rotated and crashed into a village killing two. The pilot tried to eject but all too low and was also killed. The Board managed to get from RAF Safety, a graph of stalling speed with full ventral tank and this showed clearly that the take-off was doomed from the start, Regrettably, RAF Safety also confirmed that the graph had not been circulated to all Lightning squadrons - good for 74 Sqn hierarchy in some ways but very bad for RAF Safety. The squadron CO and his Flight Commander, when shown the graph, stated very clearly

that had they been given a copy, they would have banned all so-called "shit-hot take-offs" with any fuel in the ventral tank. The Board concluded that the blame should be shared across all levels down, from the Air Ministry, particularly RAF Safety, because we also concluded that had the graph been circulated, as it should have been, the accident would not have happened. However, that did not excuse the Lightning OCU or 74 Squadron from all blame, which should be shared across all levels.

Finally, while I returned to Butterworth on the Dakota, probably about a week before the birth of our son on 26 Apr 69 at Minden Barracks, the Squadron did not redeploy to Butterworth with all aircraft and with C130 support, until 28 May 69. Rather than the common pitch out in fours, having discussed it with the Flight Commanders, I decided, for all sections of four, we would run in fast and pitch out from low level battle formation and I understand the relatively new OC, Air Cdre Ron Susans, who had replaced Air Cdre Steege, and many others were very impressed with us doing something different

Chapter 10

As I Recall

Al Emmerson

EARLY DAYS

It has just dawned on me that these events took place forty five years ago. By May 1967, Mirage equipped 75SQN was well and truly ready to deploy to Butterworth where they were to fill the gap left by the returning No 3 Squadron RAAF, which had been operating Sabres out of Butterworth from October 1958 until April 1967 as part of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve.

The first public appearance of the Mirage was at my No 13 Course graduation parade from RAAF College on 13 Dec1963. I finished a degree in Aeronautical Engineering at Sydney University and completed BFTS, before heading to 481(M) SQN Williamtown in Feb66. As a twenty four year, old fairly frightened Flying Officer, I became the Engineering Officer at 75SQN on 4Jul66.

There my job had really been to look and learn - fast. WOE Ron Chaffey and the CO, WGCDR Jim Fleming saw to it that I did, as did the SNCOs in the maintenance flight. Many of them had served in the Korean War. Ron had served in WW II, with Liberators, on spook missions, among other things. I am told one of them had been reduced in rank whilst in Japan, for hitting an SP on the head with a frozen leg of lamb which he was removing from the mess refrigerator at midnight to feed his mates who had been on duty and had not eaten for eight hours. (No names no pack drill)

Another NCO who unknownling taught me a lesson was an electrician who, some years beforehand, had climbed into a Sabre that was in the hangar for a scheduled servicing and, correctly following the worksheet, operated the trigger for the 30mm Aden cannon. A round that had been left in the breech hit the undercarriage leg on one of the aircraft on the flight line. It collapsed. A man was killed in that accident.

An inkling of future attitudes was to be had from my authorising the dismantling of the nose u/c jack of a Mirage which had just been landed successfully by SQNLDR Bill Monaghan with the nose gear unlocked. We were in Darwin and I did not think the evidence as to the cause would survive the trip through HQSC and CAC and the stores system. The job was done on my desk in the "World Wide" demountable office.

Fortunately we straight away found the O ring shavings that blocked the filter thus causing the extension problem; otherwise the CO of 481 (M) SQN would have turned his mere displeasure and a raised eyebrow into a rocketing.

I was rightly considered much too junior to take the 75SQN Maintenance Flight to Butterworth, so I was replaced by SQNLDR Jack Holden in April 1967. FOJ to his subordinates, he was an officer I should have bought a beer for on several counts. Thereafter, I was to be the officer in charge of engine repair section at 481(M) SQN, headed by FSGT Bob Davidson.

I must have begun to look like I was making a reasonable fist of it, because with effect 28AUG67 I was posted to 3SQN, recently returned from Malaysia to be re-equipped with Mirage aircraft. So was the new squadron CO, WGCDR Vance Drummond, then on course at 2 OCU undergoing Mirage conversion.

3 SQUADRON RAAF

3 SQN was to be an Independent Mirage Squadron, able to operate at

a remote base without resupply for seven to ten days and with no external maintenance support for 28days. Moreover, we were to be a dual role squadron, requiring competence in both the air-to air intercept and the air-to-ground tactical strike roles. We were to have also a tactical photo reconnaissance capability - high speed low level.

Looking back, I don't think that at the time anyone realised just what all that meant. WGDR Drummond didn't make it. He was last seen on 11May67 diving into cloud above the sea and going supersonic. Future 3 SQN members FLGOFF Marty Susans and FLTLT Bob Walsh described the incident to the doleful Court of Inquiry of which I was a member.

A lot of specialist training was required for the airmen joining the Squadron. Somehow I think we got the best airmen to be had. I had the freedom to organise the maintenance flight of some 150 men as I wished.

The concept of a mobile independent fighter squadron with such a sophisticated aeroplane was unprecedented in the RAAF at that time. Everything was new. It seemed sensible to arrange squadron maintenance support by broad function rather than by trade grouping

So we had:
a First Line Aircraft Maintenance Section, including C servicing and the Flight Line;
a Second Line Aircraft Maintenance Section, including D servicing, aircraft component and avionics maintenance, engine overhaul and P servicing, plus the dreaded wheel bay; and finally
a Maintenance Support Section taking in safety equipment, including personal parachutes, drag chutes, helmets, G-suits and so on, ground support equipment, aircraft sheet metal work, surface finishing, general engineering and motor transport.

The boundaries of the Sections changed from time to time. Three specialist engineer officers were posted in; Dave Penna ENGARM, Tony Mumford ENGRAD, and Keith Sullivan ENGINST, the latter two of whom

were Mirage trained in France. For the first 12months or so, they headed these Sections in rotation. Similarly, the senior trade NCO's rotated men from section to section so that everyone knew how to do the aeroplane husbandry jobs and no one was protected from the "black snake" refuelling hose.

We had air-transportable cabins in which to do jobs that needed a controlled environment. A special cabin was provided to automatically process the 70 mm film strips from the Fairchild KA56 camera, used in our reconnaissance role

.

Every now and again we generated a clash of authority or technical opinion with others at Williamtown, but a fairly free rein was appropriate for an independent squadron and the new maintenance organisation was effective. Thank you Darkie, Fred, Homer, Stu, Ted, Bushy, Bob, Wal and all the others who made things work.

WGCDR Drummond's accident is attributed to 3SQN in the literature, because he was the nominated Squadron CO. But as the aircraft, A3-77, and the pilot were on strength of 2 OCU and the maintenance release certification and flight authorisation were made at 2 OCU, 3SQN's first Mirage accident was yet to come. We did not have long to wait.

About 60nm north of Newcastle, on the night of 25 September 1967, suddenly everything went quiet for FLGOFF Marty Susans and the aircraft he was flying, A3-52. The engine speed indicator read zero. The jet pipe temperature was dropping. The master FAIL light was illuminated. When the falling hydraulic pressure hit the limit the warning horn went off.

Marty transmitted a Mayday and ejected. Though Marty landed heavily, he came home alright that night but, despite an air and land search over the following days and weeks, we could not find his aeroplane.

Many months passed before we found A3-52. The aircraft had plunged

into the steep side of Mt Berrigo, at the base of a small tree and almost perpendicularly to the local slope. The fuselage hit with such impact as to completely bury itself in the clay and to throw up a plume of debris, including the tree, which all then fell back into place, camouflaging the impact site.

From time to time, one of the local farmers, thinking there would be a reward for finding the wreckage, had taken to walking through the area with his dog. On one occasion the dog's foot was cut. Looking around to see what had caused it, the farmer began to find pieces of aluminium alloy sheet and of rubber sheet on the ground. He found pieces of spar on which manufacturing data was written and ultimately a panel with A3-52 stencilled onto it.

There was no reward for finding the wreckage and the farmer lost his dog that afternoon. WGCDR Newham, the replacement CO, consoled the farmer on behalf of the Squadron with a case of something expensive from the bar.

On Mt Berrigo, the crash crater was approximately circular; about 30ft across and eight to twelve inches deep and the periphery was littered with pieces of light sheet metal and rubber from the fuel tanks. It was clear we would have to dig into the side of the hill to find the engine and so the cause of the total failure.

As I recall, we had a Corporal Airfield Defence Guard on strength at that time, in the Army Liaison section, and he and some offsiders set up a camp for us at the crash site, with a radio link back to Squadron HQ at Williamtown. We asked for a back hoe to be sent up and, to provide a space on the steep hillside on which it could work, one of the foresters working nearby was given the chance to show off with his bulldozer. We were alarmed by the display, as intended, but also duly thankful.

With the backhoe sitting on the bulldozed "bench", the operator dug down the axis of the fuselage, dropping the dirt to one side and taking the aircraft parts to the other where they were instantly identified and

used to keep the hoe on line. A remarkable aspect was that as each bucket full of clay was taken, it revealed a fresh clay surface with a near complete cross section of the compressor casing in it, as a gel that had formed from the magnesium in the engine case and the soil composition.

We found the engine gearbox coupling intact and unworn, so the obvious suspect was not the culprit. I declared lunch. As we sat amongst the debris chewing our sandwiches, there was a bevel gear of about five inches diameter at my feet. I pushed it around with the toe of my boot.

I said to FSGT Parker, the senior ENGFITT present, "I didn't think they had stub tooth gears anywhere in the gear box drive."
"They don't," he replied.
So the culprit was found. The bevel gear pair in the accessory gearbox drive train had moved out of mesh and stripped.

Single seat Mirages came in two and a half different flavours in Australia. Aircraft in the range A3-51 to A3-100 were manufactured as fitted for but not necessarily with the Cyrano IIB radar (which had a ground mapping capability), a Doppler drift (ground speed measuring) system, a radar altimeter and a camouflage paint scheme. When they came into service these aircraft were known as Mirage III O (A). There was a sub-set of these aircraft which had wings modified to carry fuel in the leading edges
.
Apropos of the paint scheme, the new CO, WGCDR Jake Newham, decided that there would definitely be no tail-art on our aeroplanes and that was it. I'm sure we all agreed. We did not need to advertise. It was most undignified and not at all warlike. Although we did have authorised the Squadron's official badge on a decal near the cockpit. The paint also deferred an emerging problem. Pitting corrosion was being found on the wing skins of the unpainted aeroplanes.

By default, the earlier aircraft, A3-2 to A3-50, became known on paper

as Mirage IIIO (F) until they went through a modification program and became Mirage IIIO (F/A). The silly part about this was that an aircraft could be changed from one designation to the other simply by changing the radar. And change radars we did - the mean time between failures or MTBF was about 8 hours, if we were lucky. We also changed engines too, but at every 25hours.

Mirages were not delivered to the RAAF in serial number order. Because the Australian manufacturing program had slowed through lack of manpower, whole Mirage fuselages were imported from France. These were allocated the odd numbers A3-61 to A3-79 and were Mirage IIIO (A) when they came into service with the RAAF in 1966. The aircraft were mated with wings in Australia and, as I recall, most did not have leading edge fuel.

3SQN, in the Fighter Ground Attack role, needed the additional fuel and the navigation capability which came with all Mirage III O(A). But we did not want a mixture of different fuel capacities. For that reason, WGCDR Newham later lobbied to have single seat aircraft A3-81 to A3-100, and that he achieved. We would send an aeroplane to the factory for modification and would take a new one from the production line.

We had a slightly awkward relationship with the No 481 Maintenance Squadron. The equipment and the trained men needed to do many of the jobs we would have to do were actually being used by that unit to maintain all the aircraft on the base, including ours. If passed over to us, it all would have been under-utilised. Eventually, as I recall, some of the facilities stayed in use with 481SQN until we needed them

The black pointy front bit on the Mirage is the neoprene-covered housing for the fire control radar antenna. The actual radar workings are located in the next section of the fuselage which is aluminium covered. These items were not supplied with the aeroplane.

Like any other armaments they were Government Furnished Equipment, or GFE, fitted to the aircraft by RAAF. As delivered to the

RAAF the aircraft had a dummy nose cone appropriately ballasted. 3SQN painted the aluminium bit black on receipt, to match the overall camouflage paint scheme. A little game was played as a result of this. Radars which we sent to 481SQN for maintenance beyond our capability came back without the black paint, only to be painted black once more.

But games like this were dangerous. This was made very clear when rate gyros for the pitch and roll channels were installed for the wrong function after items were put into store with the colour coding reversed. There were issues, too, with the stagger of the aircraft into E Servicing. We received all our aircraft almost at once with about the same number of flying hours on them. The unit which was to do our E Servicing wanted a nice uniform stagger of 2000 hours between the most used and the least used, and said so.

It made no sense and we could not have achieved it even if it did make sense. We staggered the aircraft into the D Servicing, which I thought had some justification, as it ensured maximum availability for the flight line. There was also a blue over the storage of drop tanks.

On a lighter note, although rivalry between squadrons was not intense, puffery and corresponding derisory labels were not unheard of when the RAF was about later at Tengah on Singapore Island. When someone referred to 3SQN as "bloody lizards" owing to the camouflage paint on the aircraft, the label stuck. Almost overnight there were red-throated bearded dragons, the Australian frill-necked lizard, *en garde* everywhere.

There was quite a commotion when I arrived at the flight line at about 0845 on 25 January 1968. We had ten aircraft on line, fitted apiece with 120 rounds of 30mm ball, eight 11 lb practice bombs and 860 gallons of fuel. Dailies were being done and there was the usual array of NC7Bs, oxy trolleys and the like.

But everybody was running. Those on the tarmac were running to the

hangar and those near the hangar were running towards the end of the flight line about seventy meters away where A3-66 was standing, smoking. A Clarktor tractor with a Mirage towbar shot out of the hangar with intent. Then suddenly it was all over.

While functionally checking the transformer rectifier unit LAC Summers (ELECFITT) noticed a problem with interaction between the battery master switch and the external AC supply. He climbed down from the cockpit to be greeted by black smoke coming from the TRU access panel. He shouted "Fire!", disconnected the AC power and ran 75 yards to the hangar to tell Base Fire Services and to get a fire extinguisher.

Meanwhile, CPL Andy Page (INSTFIT) had run 75 yards to the aircraft pulling a wheeled CO2 extinguisher, one of those CO2 jobs with the telescopic spout and the cone and disc nozzle director. The telescopic delivery tube release pin jammed so Andy and CPL Brophy, recently arrived, manhandled the entire extinguisher up onto the wing as LAC Summers returned with the same type of extinguisher and opened the equipment bay hatch.

Now it may have been at that moment that the pin preventing the telescopic delivery tube from extending had been removed from the second extinguisher, for the tube shot up like a rocket, coming to a halt only upon striking the equipment bay hatch a millisecond later. On the way, the guillotine-like nozzle director disc destroyed the radar altimeter.

The extinguishers, one way or another, did their job. The base fire tender arrived as the smoke cleared. Four minutes go to whoa.

We had gone to some trouble to have radio altimeters fitted to the Squadron's aircraft. In fact we had made a bit of a nuisance of ourselves over the matter, as I recall, because they were quite a desirable adjunct to the Doppler and therefore to the navigation system as a whole.

The fuel system in the Mirage III needed more supervision from the

pilot than should have been necessary. There was fuel in thirteen tanks sequenced by float valves and air pressure and delivered to the engine by boost pumps in a collector box. There was always a concern that the float valves had not operated properly and the next tank in sequence was not delivering fuel.

The indications given to the pilot purported to show whether fuel was being transferred or not. But they actually only indicated that a particular switch had closed. The truth of the matter would not be evident until there was perhaps only 130 gallons of available fuel remaining. That could prove awkward.

FLGOFF Neil Smith was flying a simulated strike on shipping more than 100 miles out to sea from the east coast of Malaysia when he became aware that he was not going to have enough fuel to get home. Fortunately he was able to land at Kuantan on the coast to refuel but it was a close-run thing.

FLGOFF Peter Tipppet, an electrical engineer posted to the Squadron as a pilot, devised a sensor based on a thermistor which would indicate to the pilot whether fuel was actually flowing. This would have solved the problem, but alas.

In 1970, there was a Mirage mods status conference in Canberra which the CO, by then WGCDR Ted Radford, and I attended. We presented Peter's proposal but nothing came of it. I suspect the conference was more concerned with justifying the gold-plated windscreens they had ordered, at great cost, to overcome misting during high speed descent.

Maintenance administration for an aircraft is much more important than it may seem to the uninitiated. "The job is not done until the paperwork is finished" was a truism from World War II.

In Australia not so long ago, a major airline was put out of business by poor records keeping. A lot of people have been killed in aircraft because of unintelligible or incomplete or incorrect records.

In the days of Vampires and Sabres the RAAF had been using a system of record keeping that had been devised by the RAF in the 1930s. There was a daily maintenance log, the Form E/E77 and a version of the same used when travelling. Significant events from these were transcribed into the aircraft and engine permanent log books when the E/E77 was full. There were some circumstances, however, where the system could not cope.

During my time at 481SQN, a Sabre on which we had just done a D Servicing could not pass its flight test. Rex Budd, the unit test pilot, reported that the aircraft kept dropping a wing just before the stall. Now the usual cause of that was either not having the aeroplane flying straight and level approaching the stall, or asymmetry in the retracted position of the flaps.

Rex said he was flying straight and level, the Electricians said the flap micro switches were adjusted correctly and the Airframe Fitters said their bits were OK, too, so it must be the electricians fault. This argument went on for some days. I think we did five test flights. By this stage I had begun to think seriously about the problem.

How did Rex know he was straight and level, I asked myself? He used the artificial horizon, of course. The troops did an incidence check and found that when the transverse datum, the top cockpit longerons, was level the artificial horizon read one wing low. So, next check. Was the artificial horizon mounted properly in the instrument panel? Yes, it seemed so. Conclusion? The aircraft itself. On further checks, no, the longerons were coplanar.

It was only then that I thought to consult the log book. Working backwards through the log it took only fifteen minutes to find that our bird had landed without a nose-wheel some years earlier and had a replacement nose from another aircraft grafted on. As the packing which would have been needed to level the instrument panel was recorded only in the donor aircraft`s log book, it was probably removed during some later major maintenance. The aeroplane had been flying one wing down for some time.

The E/E77 system worked reasonably well until many of the components of a modern aircraft had operational lives imposed or were intended to be removed from the aircraft for maintenance and so clearly needed their own maintenance log. Thus the Component History Recording System, or CHRS, was introduced in about 1966.

This meant that the aircraft became a collection of serial numbered parts flying in close formation, each with its own component history record cards. This collection of cards was kept in steel trays in purpose-built cabinets for twenty-one aeroplanes (the squadron also had a Mirage IID dual seat) and was near enough to immobile. How were we going to be an effective fighting squadron, readily deployable at a minute's notice, with so much lead in its baggage?

In the end we decided to leave most of it in our wake, on the grounds that we would recover the record every 28 days as we had done with the travel copy of the E/E77. The Flyaway Kit, with its multiplicity of spare components, was simply treated as another aircraft. Nevertheless and inevitably I suppose, there was a snag with this set up.

SQN LDR "Zip" Johnston returned from one particular 45 degree dive bombing sortie in 1968 looking decidedly stirred, if not shaken. When pointing downwards at high speed, he had attempted to recover and found he could not raise the nose of the aircraft. He had to manually over-ride the Auto Command, the pitch channel of the autopilot, by brute force to avoid following his bombs into the ground.

The relevant box was removed from the aeroplane and taken to the specialist section for investigation. A replacement box was fitted to the aircraft. At the specialist section no fault could be found with the box, but it wasn't been closed up and put on the shelf for the next unsuspecting customer. Doing the rounds of his section, FSGT "Tex" Morton remembered something about the serial number of the box.

The SNCO's notebook in his top pocket told him the box had been in

before, having caused much the same problem in another squadron. It had been checked and returned to service with the CHRS record endorsed 'no fault found'. FSGT Morton told the tech at the bench to let the box run on test for another hour or so.

As he was going to lunch, the tech accidentally bumped the bench, whereupon the box behaved as reported. A coil was broken, invisibly, inside its potting. Frequently, it is the entry that was not made that proves to be vital.

Talking of autopilots …… The Instrument Fitter on the 3SQN flight line didn't quite know what to do when he found that the previous pilot of A3-107, a Mirage IIID dual seater, had U/S'd the roll stab. That is, he had logged the roll stabilisation channel of the autopilot as not operating.

The Fitter told the SGT and the SGT told the FLGOFF, which is how FLGOFF Keith Sullivan came to be in the crew room asking, "Which of you warriors U/S'd the roll stab on the Dual?"

"Me, what's wrong with that?"

"The dual hasn't got roll stab, that's what!"

"Has!"

"Hasn't!"

"Has"! roared the aircrew in chorus.
"I'll bet you a case of Coke every week for a year."
"You're on!"

A quick trip to the hangar followed where the pilot in question mounted the cockpit ladder and pointed to the switch.

"There see," he indicated triumphantly.

The Instrument Officer then pointed to the missing connection from the control column to the roll pre-servo.

"There see. Fitted for, but not with!"

Keith Sullivan had been trained in France and there was very little about the Mirage and its systems that he didn't know.

A YARN

From time to time one of the troops would commit some misdemeanour, such as not wearing boots on guard parade despite the explicit order of the WOD, that led to his being charged with an offence under Air Force Law. As "subordinate commander" I was required to deal with the charges summarily. In my seven years with the Fighter Wings, that happened fewer than half a dozen times. This says something.

There was a set patter for such occasions, from which the subordinate commander deviated at his peril. It went something like this.

WOD: "Caps off. Escort and accused quick march. Halt. Left turn. Escort and accused, sir."

OFFICER: "Thank you, Mr Cross."

To the Accused: "Are you A23456 LAC Bloggs G.C?

Accused: "Yes, sir."

OFFICER: "You are charged firstly that that on 26 August 1968 you did not appear at parade at 0800hrs and were absent without leave for a further four hours and those other men had to do your job.

Secondly that at 1215hrs on the same day you were insubordinate to the WOD."

To the WOD: "What do we know of this matter, Mr Cross?"

WOD: "LAC Bloggs was not present in the Section when the roll was marked at at 0800, sir. He turned up at the Orderly Room in civvies looking very dishevelled at midday. When I told him he was on a charge he told me to get stuffed."

To the Accused: "Do you wish to ask WOFF Cross any questions? If so, you must ask them through me."

Accused: "No questions, sir."

Offucer: "Do you wish to make a statement on this matter LAC Bloggs?" Accused: "Yes, sir."

Officer: "You may make a statement on oath or not on oath. Do you wish to make a statement on oath?"

Accused: "No, sir."

Officer: "Right, Bloggs. Tell me what happened."

Accused: "I went to town to the disco. We had a few and at about two o'clock when we came to come home I decided I had better not drive so I hitched a lift with this woman. When we got to the turn off to the

base she wouldn't stop. She took me all the way to Soldiers Point for sex, sir. All of that night and most of next day, sir. "

Officer: "Hmm. Thank you, LAC Bloggs. Do you wish to call any witnesses on your behalf?"

Accused: "No, sir."

Officer: "Adjutant, What do we know about LAC Bloggs?"

Adjutant: "He has a clean sheet, sir."

Officer: "LAC Bloggs, the punishment I propose to award you entitles you to a trial by court martial. Do you wish to have a trial by court martial?" Accused: "No, sir."

Officer: "Very well. I award you one day's loss of pay. March them out please ,Mr Cross. And let's have Bloggs back again."

WOD: "Caps on. About turn. Quick march. Halt. Right turn. Fall out."

WOD: "LAC Bloggs, sir."

Officer: "Listen, Bloggs. Next time, make sure that I haven't heard the story before!"

Apocryphal but amusing and quite trivial compared to the legal predicament A3-46 presented. There had already been a court of inquiry into a particular accident where an aircraft crashed, when I, as his then subordinate commander, had to deal summarily with the charges against the SNCO who supervised the maintenance on the engine in the crashed aircraft.

The story was that one afternoon during a deployment this SNCO, for lack of personnel, had been supervising simultaneously the flight line and the reassembly of an engine. The Fitter actually doing the reassembly was a good man but he made an error, one that he might not have made had there been sufficient technical publications on hand. The SNCO in question could not do everything at once. He trusted the Fitter and chose to directly supervise the Flight Line rather than the engine reassembly.

So we had two errors, one of skill and, arguably, another of judgement. As I recall, no one was charged over those errors. However, there was a third error. Air Board Orders (Technical) required the supervising NCO to set inspection points, beyond which reassembly was not to proceed

without his approval. The check inspections were usually set out on the reassembly work sheets which should have been part of the publication set for the engine.

So, I was faced with a "failure to obey a local or other order"; and a maintenance error that caused a catastrophic accident. In this case the two were directly linked.

I had two choices. I could dismiss the charge, or I could award a punishment. I chose to award the minimum possible punishment. I daresay matters like this are dealt with quite differently these days. The maintenance error was not found by a check inspection because someone was trying to do the right thing, trying to meet a schedule made by somebody else. Such time pressures are seldom justified and are often self-imposed. The experience served me well in later civvie street years.

No 3 SQUADRON - AGAIN

"Operation of No 3 Squadron at TINDAL for Exercise HIGH JUPITER will require the following support." So began the letter from WGCDR Newham to Headquarters Operational Command on 20th February 1968.

There followed a list of equipment and facilities required at Townsville and Tindal together with air transport support to the tune of 30 tons of ground support equipment, tools and spares, 132 passengers, and two air-portable cabins of then unknown weight. I still have the entire list.

Everything was listed from self-propelled electric power units (NC7B) at 3000lb a throw, to a 1lb tin of lanolin. The whole kit and caboodle was to be carried by seven C130s. I see that SGT Smith, CPL Twomey, and LACs Doyle, Lollback, and Mellows were to fly in Herc Chalk 5, along with an engine rollback stand and a spare engine, to be abeam Townsville at H+1hr 20.

I don't know whether anyone fully appreciated the meticulous

planning that was necessary to ensure that what was wanted was where it was wanted, when it was wanted. On for example, the 28th day of a deployment when we were about to take off for home and the last Mirage had a brake failure.

Planning of this sort had been going on, when required, for fifteen or more years of course, but "when required" was the issue. It had all been very much ad hoc. That it worked was a testament to the SNCOs in the Squadron. Whoever first said that the SNCOs were the back-bone of the Service was right on the money. For those of you who wondered what the SENGO actually looked like and what he did for the rest of the day, after making a nuisance of himself in the hangar, turning those sorts of plans into standing orders was part of it.

With three experienced ENGOs and two WOEs to look after daily squadron maintenance business, I saw my role as, firstly, to make sure they had the where-with-all to do their jobs, secondly, to attend to special engineering problems and thirdly, what might be called if it didn't sound so grandiose, "engineering planning".

In retrospect, attending to the important but not urgent matters was the way to avoid being swamped by too many matters that arose as both important and urgent later on. The real trick was to palm off tasks that were urgent but unimportant; those with artificial or unjustifiable deadlines, set by somebody else for example - the quarterly fly paper returns, etc.

Perhaps the first of the planning jobs arose out of the need to determine our personnel requirements and express them in a way that would convince Department of Air when the time came. To that end, I started a reliability measuring scheme. There was a sheet for each aircraft on which was recorded, day by day, the occasions on which unscheduled maintenance was performed on each aircraft system. The scheme ran for about six months.

By the end of June 69 we were able to say, at least without fear of

contradiction, what the probability was that we would be able to maintain a given sortie rate with our current manning. Plus what the chances were of an aircraft returning with a particular system unserviceable. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

Engineering investigations are all very well, but you must ask yourself, "What am I going to do with the answer, what will I be allowed to do and can anything actually be done anyway?"

The Mirage had a few disconcerting tricks in its repertoire. Commonly, when pitching out for landing, the aeroplane would howl. I don't remember whether this was loud enough to be heard in the cockpit, but it could certainly be heard from the ground. The noise was caused by the compressor blades rubbing on the compressor casing.

The rub marks could be seen on engine disassembly. They were not aligned with the aircraft pitch plane. My guess was that, as the compressor casing was being bent by the inertia forces in the turn, it squashed into an elliptical cross section with minor diameter smaller than the undistorted circular section. The minor diameter of the ellipse was inclined to the pitch plane because the casing was not uniformly stiff. I don't remember whether this was investigated or verified. What would we have done with the answer?

I recall the day when Dave Penna, the Armament officer, came to my office to report that an armament fitter had just been taken to hospital with hands burned while emptying spent "brass" from the bin in the gun pack.

As this was a routine servicing task the immediate question was, "What is the normal temperature of the brass?"

By the sheerest fluke, Dave found some temperature-indicating crayons in the store. On the next day several sorties were flown with the ammunition marked with the crayons. The after flight temperature in the bin was, as I recall, about 140 C and so personal protection was just

a matter of wearing gloves and an apron. If you could so persuade an ARMFITT to wear them.

But at the conclusion of each firing burst, the DEFA cannon ejects one unfired round into the bin and these rounds were also reaching 140C. The melting point of the primer in the DEFA HE rounds was about the same temperature.

The possibility was that the primer, which had simply been heated to less than 140C, or which had melted and resolidified under uncontrolled conditions, would become over-sensitive and explode in the bin, or when being handled while the bin was emptied after flight.

I submitted an urgent Defect Report.

There was some scoffing about it. 3SQN could do nothing on its own. And, as I recall, nothing happened, anyway.

EXERCISES

There is some inevitability about the contest between carrier-borne strike aircraft and land based fighters. The distance from us to them is the same as the distance from them to us. Our runway will be longer so our range and weapons load can be greater. But the carrier can change its position over night and, with the surveillance assets available to us in the 1960s, could do so undetected.

Thus it was that at 0400 on a Wednesday morning the whole of Williamtown was up and running. By 0430 every serviceable Mirage on the base had its engine running.

A Royal Navy carrier with a flight deck full of Blackburn Buccaneers and DH Sea Vixens was running down the Australian coast with the intention of attacking Williamtown as soon as they came into range and before first light, believing that we would not be able to find them in the dark. But they reckoned without the Mirage radar.

For those readers who understand these things today, it was a 3cm band monopulse search and tracking radar of 200kW peak output power and max range of less than 27nm, weighing only about 650lb.

With transmission frequency adjustable from 8,500 MHz to 9,600MHz, it had two modes;
air-to-air with 2 kHz pulse repetition frequency and a 0.5micro second pulse length, and;
air-to-ground with 645Hz pulse repetition frequency and a 1.75 micro second pulse length.

Of these parameters, presumably the RN knew nothing.

A plot was hatched to have a Mirage fly out 'on the deck', find the carrier with its radar and radio back its position. As I recall, ex-RADTECH FLGOFF Bob Dannat was the pilot. The plot worked like a dream.

On receipt of the target position every aeroplane on Williamtown started moving. There were aircraft taxying everywhere, all sequenced to arrive over the target from different directions simultaneously. There were about 60 aircraft. I shut my eyes and thought about Ploesti, an unfortunate multi-aircraft strike in Europe by the USAF during WW II.

It was all over in a minute.

One airman who had cadged a ride in the back seat of a Dual said to me at smoko, "Jesus, sir, we went down the side of the carrier so low I had to look up to see the flight deck."

I wonder what happened to the gun camera films.

On a later occasion, some frames from the gun cameras were released to the press when the Brit's PR began crowing about their success in deploying to Malaysia as part of Exercise Bersatu Padu.

Air defence exercises came in several flavours.

There were "ADEXs", the afternoon and evening engagements with Canberra's from Amberley attacking Sydney, defended by whatever we could muster at Williamtown and guided by the Control and Reporting Unit at Brookvale.

There were "HIGHs" where one of the Williamtown based squadrons would defend Darwin against RAAF Canberras, AVRO Vulcans and Handley Page Victors of the RAF, and once against USAF B52s. Each of these exercises had its code-name pre-fixed by the word 'HIGH'.

But HIGH JUPITER was different. In this one, 3SQN was to attack Darwin from Tindal, with 76SQN as the Darwin defenders.

We were just beginning to settle into Tindal. All our Mirages had arrived, as had the supporting Hercs. Most of us had our personal gear stowed in a tent somewhere. It must have been about 1700hrs ……

The WOE came to me with a piece of paper in his hand.

"Hi, sir. I didn't think there was going to be any night flying tonight."

"Neither did I," I responded.

"Well, I've just been handed a night flying program. The troops are going to be a bit crooked on it."

"More than that," I said, leaping up. "Some of them have been on the go since four this morning. There's a safety consideration. If we don't need to fly … Let's find the CO."

The CO was duly found. He listened. I misjudged his frame of mind and pushed it too far.

"*Flight Lieutenant Emmerson, 3SQN flies tonight!*"

"Don't worry about it, sir," said the WOE, "We can do it"

And 'We' did.

What I had not been told, of course, was that HIGH Jupiter was being used to prove that 3SQN was finally operational.

HIGH Jupiter was a resounding success.

There is a story that can now be told.

On a previous deployment to Darwin, 3SQN had been contacted by the maintenance people at No 3 Control and Reporting Unit (CARU) on Lee Point. They were having trouble with a UHF radio set and wondered if 3SQN might have someone who could help.

Our senior RADTECHA, FSGT Ted Plant, dealt with it personally.
Like any good SNCO he recorded the details of his assistance in his note book, including all Lee Point's operational frequencies.

So it was that on the first day of HIGH Jupiter, 3SQN aircrew knew the UHF frequencies that the CARU would be using and that there were only four of them. Duck soup for a bit of electronic warfare.

Simple noise jamming was the first use. Barry Schultz flew the last leg of his attack on Darwin singing on one frequency, "*Pussy cat, Pussy cat, where are you, Pussy cat*?"

Later there was a bit more sophistication. Jack Smith, as I recall, took over control of the intercept that was intended to find him by assuming the defending fighter's callsign and accusing the defending pilot as being the spoofer. Shades of the Airborne Cigar tactics used by the RAF bombers raiding Germany in WW II.

The Squadron flew some 200 sorties over the Exercise period. The CO was mightily pleased.
I was not so sure how we would have gone if the aircraft were carrying live weapons or we if had to last 28days. Any way, we were officially operational.

Looking back now, I see we served up the aeroplanes well enough, but it was all a bit Boy's Own Annual. No one was shooting at us as they had at our predecessors in the Second World War. That would have been the ultimate test.

TECHNICALITIES

Sometime during my last weeks at high school in 1959, my Physics teacher had warned me that if I joined the Army there would be days like this. Thanks, Stumpy. Now I know you meant the Air Force as well.

Earlier, I have written that there were investigations I should never have started. The most disappointing of those were related to engines. The high altitude supersonic performance of the Mirage III airframe and engine was remarkable. However, at low altitudes and high angles of attack, engine compressor stalling remained a problem.

I have lost my copy of the photo of a Mirage chasing a Canberra so close to the treetops that a kangaroo could be seen. If the fight slowed down and the manoeuvres continued the Mirage was headed for a compressor stall, perhaps a flame-out and indeed on at least one occasion that is exactly what happened.

Problems like this were all but unknown in the previous generation of fighters. They arose from the inevitable design compromises chosen when the flight envelope extended from zero to 60,000 ft and zero to 2.2 Mach. The Mirage had much designed into it to control this problem and those of the fully modulated afterburner. Stops correctors, fuel dippers, over-speed approach control, inlet spike, nozzle, bleed air….I am surprised that anyone had a proper handle on the way it all worked when assembled into an aeroplane.

So when the engine's manufacturer, SNECMA, released the results of about 1000 hours of testing in their altitude simulating test bed I thought it would be useful to write a story around those results explaining, for the benefit of the aircrew who had to ride in front of this engine, what was going on and how to stay out of trouble, or recover should they find themselves in it. My problem was that SNECMA's reports were in French.

In surprisingly good time, working only at nights, I completed a manuscript of 27 pages plus 6 pages of diagrams. As I look at the manuscript now, I see that it was quite a good job. Like so many

others, however, I don't think anyone read it.

"Hey, you guys, I'm pulling this target not pushing it!"

Air-to-air gunnery practice in the 1960s and 1970s meant shooting paint-dipped ball ammunition at a banner towed by a visiting Canberra. The banner looked a bit like an oversize tennis court net. It had a weighted aluminium spreader tube at the front and was attached to the Canberra via explosive bolts, a swivel and a thousand feet of cable.

Getting this ironmongery airborne was a fairly straightforward exercise. Putting it back on the ground with the Canberra still attached up front was not to be recommended. Understandably, the pilot of the tug was inclined to get a bit nervous when the projectiles began to hit the spreader bar rather than the centre of the banner.

When such errors happened regularly, there was cause for concern. When the senior pilots and sharp-shooters were getting low scores something had to be done, because it was obviously a matter of the gunsight misleading the pilot.

A crew room convention suggested that the aircraft radars were "over-ranging". That is, the radar was telling the gunsight that the range to the target was further than it actually was. This would cause the gunsight to direct the pilot to aim further ahead of the target, to "pull more lead" in the jargon, than was necessary for accuracy.

The CSF 97K gunsight fitted to the Mirage was a complex piece of kit. In the air guns mode it provided a head-up display of mean-point-of-impact and a drum-like approximate range indicator. Exact range was provided to the sight from radar

Things finally came to the stage where, when lining up for take-off, a pilot would check the ranging of the radar by locking onto a prominent object at a known distance from the aircraft and reading

the range from the gunsight display. Radars which did not show the correct range were written up as unserviceable. FSGT Ted Plant, our senior RADTECHA, was going spare. So was his boss, ENGRAD Tony Mumford.

During radar maintenance, the calibration of the ranging function in the radar was at least ten times as accurate as the precision with which the sight head could show range. I thought it might be useful to find out what was really going on. Thirty pages of mathematics later I found the answer. The gunsight in the Mirage was not as accurate as that in the Sabre. What I discovered was that the Mirage sight did not solve the gunnery equation exactly.

The Mirage III was a product of the era in which interceptors were thought not to need guns. Air-to-air missiles were the coming thing. The twin cannons in the Mirage III were aligned to strike the target, harmonised more in the manner of a double-barrelled shotgun than a rifle. In the firing condition, speed attitude, etc., being used by our pilots, the departure from the manufacturer's designed firing condition would cause the projectiles to hit 10ft ahead of and 6ft below the aiming point. I'm not sure this work was all that appreciated. Still, we stopped having under-ranging radars being blamed.

From about the bottom of the chain of command in the Service, or other bureaucratic organizations, it was very difficult in those days to have anything new adopted. Changes were supposed to come from the top down, not from the bottom up. But top and bottom were not always where you might have thought they were.

I think the CO of 481(M) SQN, at that time a wily old GPCAPT, had in mind letting me learn that lesson when he told me to take my proposal for an improved method of using engine air test data to the most senior of the squadron test pilots on the base.

Whenever an Atar 9C engine was installed in a Mirage III, the functionality and performance of the engine was checked during a so-

called engine air test. There was a specification for conducting this engine air test and it was expressed in the proforma used by the pilot to record the inflight observations. The proformae being used were rather scruffy postal-envelope-sized, roneoed, often illegible sheets which were carried on the pilot's kneepad. (No Xerox machines in those days).

The problem, as I saw it, was this. The engine performance was intended to be measured by a series of times-to-climb and level accelerations, but nowhere was there specified the times and accelerations which should be achieved. There was no performance standard.

So I set out to devise a performance standard. This would consist of a series of graphs that showed thrust and fuel flow after adjustment to account for atmospheric conditions and aircraft configuration during the engine air test. The graphs would be produced from basic gas turbine theory and from the results of a large number of previous test flights.

To do all of that, we needed to know the temperature at various altitudes. This was available from balloon radio-sonde data collected by the met office. To keep all the data for a flight together, I proposed another column be added to the engine air test proforma to record outside air temperatures. This column would be filled in after the flight.

I worked up a proposal, about six pages of fairly technical explanation, the new proforma, plus an example of the way it would work and took it to the CO 481 (M) SQN, my boss, who knew a bit about testing aeroplanes. I was surprised when he said take it to the senior squadron test pilot. This I did and inside 20 minutes I was in the back seat of a Mirage IIID taxying for an engine air test so that I could see how difficult it was and why there should be no additions to the schedule.

The flight went well enough. I managed to fill in the proforma. I

handled the aeroplane for a few minutes and was taken beyond Mach 2.0. The pilot seemed pleased and surprised. He did not know I had any solo jet time. Nevertheless it was clear that he would not support my proposal.

I learned the lesson though. As SENGO at 3SQN in Butterworth I just went ahead and did it. Our squadron test pilot, Bruce Searle, was quite enthusiastic about it all. I used observations from 50 or more test flights to produce the standard (neither computer nor calculator then, of course). I still have the originals.

Unless such procedures are written up properly and published as an AAP they do not survive more than two personnel posting cycles. So if the time required to produce an official document while doing the rest of your job is longer than the posting cycle, then you might as well not start in the first place. It would not be drawing too long a bow to suggest that the RAAF lost aeroplanes for this reason**.**

AND ON THE SIXTY EIGHTH DAY … OPERATION THOROUGHFARE

PERT was all the rage in the 1960s. To give it its full title, Project Evaluation and Review Technique was a method of analysing the sequence of tasks involved in a project and calculating the earliest time at which the total project could be completed. An important aspect was the discipline it imposed on defining the tasks and their inter-relationships.

Along, I suppose, with many other new engineers I had taught myself the technique. The simple repetitive calculations made this an ideal task for a computer had there been any available. But in the 1960s laptops with graphics software packages were a pipe dream. That was in the days when computers occupied a complete room, were characterized by miles of paper tape on big spools and were guarded by white coated priests.

So we did it by hand. Pencil and paper produced large charts that

looked like the most complex railway marshalling yard. But it worked, as long as you remembered GIGO - Garbage In Garbage Out.

I thought the technique was just the shot for planning the 3SQN's coming deployment to Butterworth and that is what I did. Every pre-deployment task from inoculating the Mums and kids to launching the aircraft went onto the chart in its proper place and its duration went into the accompanying tables. After several weeks I had come up with an "answer," which was wrapped in uncertainty but was the best I could do.

I went next door to the CO's office. With a twinge of melodrama appropriate for such a "eureka moment" and without preamble, I announced, "68 days, sir."

As I recall, he had no idea what I was talking about, not having been privy to my PERT activities. We talked for a moment or two, then he pinned the chart on the wall and it became "official". 3SQN, lock, stock and barrel, could deploy to Butterworth at 68 days' notice. The name of that deployment was Operation Thoroughfare.

I was not at Williamtown when the order came through, but our armament officer, Dave Penna, who was acting OIC PERT in my place, later told me it arrived on 11Dec 68 and required 3SQN to be on the job at Butterworth on Monday 17 Feb1969. From then on, he said, everyone just followed the plan.

I remember having told him to be sure we made the transit through the Indonesian Air Force base at Juanda (in eastern Java) look clean, quick and efficient, and the arrival at Butterworth organised and tidy. "People" would be watching.

On the Sunday morning I was in the Base Ops Room at Butterworth to monitor the Squadron's arrival at Juanda. The SATCO had arranged for us to hear some of what was going on. OC RAAF Butterworth and his entourage turned up after smoko.

Once the aircraft were all on the ground in Indonesia and the airwaves had gone quiet I went for a quick lunch. On my return I could hear arrangements being made for a single Mirage to leave Juanda early and land in Singapore. That definitely was not part of the plan.

An airplane landing short of Butterworth could only mean one thing - a fuel system problem. Now I was nervous.

I joined the previously small crowd, which had by now grown to the length of the flight line. The anticipation could be felt. The chocks were set out in readiness. The marshallers were ready. (in the day-glow waist coats the OC Butterworth disliked. Woops.)

There was a buzz when the first aircraft appeared on finals, silence when it touched down, relief when the drag chute deployed and hearty applause when the 3SQN CO stepped out of A3-81. Then followed A3-82, parking alongside, then A3-83 and 84. By the time A3-86 arrived the crowd could see what was happening and there was more applause.

When the next aircraft to arrive was out of sequence and parked out of place there was an "Oh" of disappointment, but more clapping when the sequence resumed with a space for a missing airplane.

The story had begun a month earlier when HQ OPCOM was able to supply only one fewer Hercs than the number we needed. As a result, there was not a pair of tanks to replace those punctured when Bren Roberts over-rotated on landing at Djuanda.

Frantic efforts were made to repair the tanks, but to no avail fortunately. Not having been there I don't know the details, but I did hear the word speed-tape mentioned as a solution. The aircrew had a better idea.

SQNLDR Bob Walsh was to fly the airplane to Singapore on internal fuel only. After being towed to the end of the runway and taking off

without afterburner, that is just what he did; 750 nautical miles on less than 620 gallons. That may have caught the attention of those "People" who were watching. And the reason for the "missing" airplane on arrival at Butterworth?

When Bob arrived in Singapore it was raining - really raining.
He could barely see the taxiway to position the airplane for refuelling and there was no cockpit ladder. He sat there for a long time.

During their stay in Butterworth the squadrons on the Base including 77SQN had employed a number of "locally engaged civilians".

There were the Swinging Sisters of Base Squadron whose performance with the short blade scythe was highly choreographed to avoid blood and bone fertilizing the grass while cutting it toenail short.
Then there were the Engine and Airframe Mechanics and Fitters, the Surface Finishers and the General Hands. Anyone who has seen a Sabre will remember the dozens of labels painted on the skin.
These were applied by stenciling.

I watched one of these men walk around a Sabre with an armful of stencils casually and unerringly dropping each one in the place it would be required.

With 77SQN gone, the locally engaged civilians had no jobs.
We were not allowed to re-employ them as fitters and mechanics.
The Mirage was considered by some to be too sophisticated or its bits too highly classified.

3SQN did re- employ two local men whom I remember well, even if I can't spell their names properly.
In particular Subramaniam, or just Maniam.
He was built like a whippet. If he stood sideways he wouldn't cast a shadow.

The Rolls Royce Avon in the Sabre had an isopropyl nitrate (IPN)

fuelled starter, and it had been one of the jobs of the second man, Mr. Onions, (rightly pronounced Oh-night-uns) to top up the IPN tanks of the Sabres on the flight line.

He became known to 77SQN as IPN Onions, using the vegetable pronunciation.

He was built like a tennis ball, and always seemed cheerful.

Any time I arrived at the hangar Onions would sing out. "Koppee Boss?" To which I would reply "Yu ai Onions" and he would in a flash be pouring white coffee from a large aluminum kettle.

There were those who said it was the same kettle that he had used for IPN. It may have been too.

An idea I inherited from Cyril looked like being the answer to the problem of moving Mirages around in the hangar.

Hovercrafts were all the rage in the 1960s.

Cyril proposed that a simple flat plate placed under each wheel and fed with compressed air would do the job. (50psi x 200 squibs x 2 wheels = 20,000 lb)

Later on I played with the idea for a while, but I could not figure how to move across the storm water drains at each end of the hangar.

Chapter 11

Loss of Mirage A3 – 52

Marty Susans

11 Oct 68 to 7 Dec 70It was an ill-fated flight that nearly didn't happen for me.

I was to lead a stream of aircraft at five-minute intervals a night navex from Williamtown to Orange and Tamworth, returning to Willy over the Barrington Tops high country north of Newcastle. I was in A3-52, Jake Newham's own mount. She was just back from the mod programme at Avalon which incorporated ground map radar, doppler, radio altimeter, flying aids etc. just 50 hours on the clock. As a 22-year old Pilot Officer, I was impressed with my charge, and looking forward to the flight.

On start up, the alternator would not reset. We varied the RPM and the troops were busy underneath, but the ALT light would not go out. I was about to shut down when a Corporal electrician, Lindsay Ball I think, indicated he would go up onto the fuselage. Bob Walsh appeared form the crew room looking worried - what was the hold up! The equipment bay opened and Bingo, the light went out, I was on my way.

It was a cold, dark September night in 1967. There was a strong westerly blowing on the final leg and the Mirage was reveling in the conditions. My doppler was giving me 600kts ground speed, the aids were flying the plane and I could see the base on the radar; the French Lady was bunging it on. Suddenly, the engine quit, zero RPM and the fail panel lit up like a Christmas tree.

I set up in a 300kt glide and put out a Mayday call to Willy Approach. At 25,000ft I tried a relight, which achieved nothing except dimming the cockpit lights. I started to consider my options, which were very few, when suddenly both fire-warning lights came on - time to leave, Ma Cherie.

I pulled the face blind handle and the seat shot up the rails, tumbled backwards and stabilised with the drogue. There were several minutes of free fall, then to my great relief, the parachute opened at about 10,000ft. For nine minutes I swayed quietly beneath the canopy. I could see nothing below in the darkness, but I could feel the air getting warmer and I could smell the earth coming up, it smelled like - cow manure.

I hit the ground like a bag of spuds, falling backwards and banging my head. There was no wind so I lay there looking up at the stars, my heart pounding - I think it's all over.

I was very fortunate to have come down onto a cow paddock and not into high trees. I made my way down a roadway and was soon overflown by a Neptune that orbited over my beacon - I fired a flare to acknowledge. I came to a farmhouse and knocked on the door. An old man appeared, come in, he said, I'll put the kettle on. He had been contacted by the local police to be on the lookout for a downed pilot, otherwise he may have gone for the shotgun, I must have looked…alien. Shortly, a Land Rover arrived and I was taken to the Gloucester show grounds where a RAAF chopper waited. The whole town was out for the occasion.

As we wended our way back to base, the drama of the event started to sink in. I was very remorseful that I was not able to bring that fine machine back to its home. I was angry that some component had let us down, and I wanted to know what had gone wrong. But I was happy to be alive, and most grateful to Mr Martin Baker and the troops that service his equipment; the seat worked perfectly and certainly saved my life.

We searched the area for weeks with a fleet of choppers, but found nothing. The old man in the farmhouse had heard that there was a reward for finding the wreckage. He thought he heard the thump of the aircraft hitting the ground, and would go out on a different radial each weekend searching over a period of twelve months. One day he walked into a crater and kicked a bit of tin with Mirage written on it. Unfortunately, there was no reward, so we paid him a visit and presented some squadron merchandise.

Excavators were sent to the site, and started digging. They got to the rudder, the engine nozzles, the mainplane and eventually the bit they wanted at the front of the engine. Components were analysed at CAC in Melbourne and revealed that the engine gearbox bearing had seized from lack of lubrication thus shearing the Drive Bevel Gear causing engine flameout. Further inspection discovered fragments of rubber and wood blocking the oil line. It is possible that these foreign objects were part of a bung used to keep oil lines clean during the aircraft's manufacture.

The RAAF subsequently modified the Atar engine to incorporate a filter in the oil feed pipe and added an extra oil jet to the gearbox. No further such failures occurred in RAAF service

Chapter 12

How Not to Intercept a High Flying Manoeuvering Target

Jack Smith

I guess most people have a skeleton or two in their cupboard. This short tale is one such skeleton in my cupboard; it obviously involves me, and the other players were a Mirage 1110-A, a Vulcan BMk 2 of the RAF and its wily crew. The setting for the tale was a major air defence exercise centred on Darwin, with Mirages acting in the air defence role, and the Vulcans, along with other aircraft types , performing simulated raids at both high and low levels.

I was strapped in the cockpit on alert 2 (meaning 2 minutes reaction time to be airborne on receipt of a scramble order) in the operational readiness platform. The Mirage was configured with supersonic tanks, two AIM 9B Sidewinder missiles and simulated guns. The Matra R530 missile was not being carried on this occasion as most raids by attacking aircraft had been at low level where the Matra was of marginal value. However, I received a scramble order to intercept an inbound raid, and as it eventuated the target was at high level. The raiding aircraft became visible at long range due to the dense and persistent contrail it was leaving. I climbed to about 35000 ft and accelerated to supersonic speed. The GCI controller was calling the target height to be about 48000 ft. I was certainly going to need all the energy I could get to climb to above 45000 ft and still have some manoeuvring potential.

As the Mirage was only configured with Sidewinders and simulated guns the GCI controller positioned me for a stem intercept. On the attack leg of the intercept while accelerating through about mach

1.2/1.3 I called 'Judy', meaning I was in a position to continue the intercept without the GCI controller's assistance. The Vulcan crew were probably monitoring the GCI transmissions, for just as I started the turn from the attack leg to begin a climbing stern attack the Vulcan turned into me. What was a climbing attack quickly turned into a turning snap up attack as I manoeuvred with the Vulcan, with my performance decaying to less than I was hoping to maintain. Passing about 45000ft I deselected the afterburner due to my airspeed falling to below the 250KIAS lower limit at that height. At this stage it would have been prudent to unload the aircraft, dive to regain speed and energy, and reposition for another intercept.

However, I had 'blood in my eye', and no Pom bomber pilot was going to outfox me, so I continued the snap up in full 'dry' power, and was approaching a point where I believed the Sidewinder would acquire a lock on to the target. This didn't happen; I had pushed the engine envelope to the limits and a 'little' beyond. At 47000 ft with speed decaying below 200KIAS the auxiliary intake doors flapped once as the engine compressor stalled, followed by engine flameout. As the old saying goes, 'there I was with nothing on the clocks but the maker's name'. I centralized the controls and let the Mirage recover itself which it did by gently nosing over and descending.

The next lesson I learned that day was the validity of the flight manual procedure which stated that engine relight should only be attempted below 25000 ft. It certainly didn't work when I made the first relight attempt at 35000 ft. The second attempt as per the flight manual limit worked like a charm. The Pom, meanwhile, continued majestically on to the target!

For a long time felt bad about this rather humiliating incident, but in recent years I read an account by a former RAF Lightning pilot where he, together with another Lightning, performed a co-ordinated pair's intercept on a Vulcan at high level. The Vulcan (an aircraft which displayed remarkable agility for one aircraft of its size) kept these pair of Lightnings at bay to the point where they were about to call it quits

due lack of fuel, when finally one aircraft managed to acquire a missile lock and claim a 'kill'. I have also heard on the grapevine of other occasions when RAAF Mirages failed to intercept high flying and aggressively manoeuvring Vulcans and also Victors, so now I feel a little less peeved with myself than previously.

With the wisdom of hindsight, a Mirage configured with a Matra 530 doing a front quarter or head on attack on a manoeuvring high flyer may have had more chance of success, ignoring the possibility that the use of electronic warfare techniques or chaff could well have broken the Matra's lock to the intended target. However, that is a question one can 'what if to death', and of what might have been. The lesson I learnt is that 'going in all balls and back teeth' does not always have a successful outcome.

Chapter 13

A Clear Winter's Day (Seal Rocks, NSW)

(Ken "Bushy" Smith"

My final ride in the back seat of a twin seater Mirage was at Williamtown. GPCAPT Jake Newham reported an aircraft as unserviceable due to engine vibration. I told him that I could run the engine on the ground, put the vibration tester on it, and it would be perfect. However, he said: "*If you're so sure, come with me on a test flight!*".

Once we'd taken off, and done some other checks, we started an engine air test at about 36,000 feet abeam Seal Rocks.

Jake pointed the nose further out to sea and we started the Mach-run. I was in the back, head-down, pencilling a whole lot of figures about the engine's performance. After about 15 seconds at Mach 2.2, we zoomed upward to wash-off speed.

When I lifted my head and looked outside, everything was the most beautiful purple. It was also a bit confusing as I thought I could see the horizon with the lighter blue but it didn't look right. So, I asked Jake: "*Where are we?*" He said: "*55,000 feet, on our back, 20 degrees nose down and heading towards Broken Bay*".

When we levelled out, and because it was a beautiful clear July day, I could see Williamtown ahead and the mountains off in the distance - with a touch of snow on the peaks. We had a little play around before an uneventful landing at Williamtown. This was my best (and final) ride in a Mirage; thanks Jake.

Chapter 14

Bang n Bang

Brendan Roberts

50 years ago come 30 October 2018, around mid-day, I was having trouble undoing my flying boots. The knots weren't stuck, but my hands wouldn't stop shaking, and my fingers no longer worked. I was in the ward of RAAF Williamtown sick quarters, trying to get out of my gear, and a sympathetic nursing sister lent a hand. I wasn't used to this. This was not the enjoyable scenario of an hour beforehand.

Way back then, I'd been the proud leader of a 3 Squadron four-ship of pointynosed Mirages on Saltash Range doing what we did best - dropping bombs and firing our twin 30mm Defa cannons. Just like the movies. Better, actually.

But not now. Now, my back was aching something fierce, nothing much elsewhere was working properly, and I was feeling pretty second-hand, frankly. Much worse, the RAAF was now another Mirage short: I knew that for an absolute fact, and it didn't make me feel good at all.

I started thinking back …We'd arrived on the Range in good order - all neatly stacked in echelon right for a pitch-out to the left on to 'downwind' for the normal bombing and gunnery lefthand oval racetrack follow-the-leader pattern. 'Prison Cobra' was here for six passes of lay-down skip- bombing, followed by 120 rounds of 10deg dive 30mm strafe, and we weren't going to miss too often were we (because we were absolute aces)… The bombing was uneventful, except everyone had the normal difficulty of getting down to the requisite 50ft

"altitude" above ground. At 420 knots, or roughly 800kph, 50 feet appeared to be about the height of your average car seat. The target was set in the middle of the main centre "road" of the range, and the only effective way I found of achieving the correct height was to imagine I was driving a Mac truck at high speed down that road. If I did that, then Frank Fry, the Range Safety Officer of the day, might duly report success from his theodolite.

Now to the strafing. Really good fun, strafing. 10-15deg dive, about 420-450kts speed, open fire 600m, cease fire no less than 400m then pull-up with about 4g to about 30-40deg of climb to avoid any ricochets by the steel 30mm shells just fired or lying on the ground. Thence left on to downwind to 2000 ft for another go. Trick always was to see the fall of shot, so that you could adjust for the next pass if necessary. This required some pretty exquisite timing of the pull-up – too early and the rounds hadn't arrived at the target yet. But too late, and you've probably blown your minimum range requirement and fouled etc etc not good.

Anyway, all good until about my fourth pass. Had quite a few rounds on-target, from what I could see, and still a fair number of rounds to go. By this time, everybody in the team had a good rhythm going, and the exercise was in fullswing. I'm full-dry power into the pull-up, see the fall-of-shot, keep the pull going to about 4-4.5g, about to turn on to downwind at around 35deg nose-up when:

"BANG"

and the rug was cut out from under me.

Everybody has heard of aerodynamic drag, but not everyone appreciates its power. The only reason an aeroplane isn't going faster, at its current thrust setting, is the resistance of the aerodynamic drag force acting in the opposite direction. Mirage A3-70 and me got a good idea of its size at that moment, because it felt exactly like we were now in free-flight with the brakes fully-on and no engine at all.

Instantaneously occurring and immediately slowing.

Rapidly.

And the engine instruments tell me there's absolutely nothing wrong: full RPM and full exhaust gas temperature. Balls. We're at about 400 feet and climbing at 30plus degrees. We'd had about 430kts, but that's already below 400 and heading south at a rate of knots. First and only question: "WTF's occurring?!!". Surely we're too high for a ricochet, maybe the engine's just having a moment. Let's just ease back on the throttle and see if it helps:

"SCREECH"

Very, very loud and far from good, that noise. Full of tortured metal; nothing aerodynamic in that noise, like what might come from a good old compressorstall or something. That thing sounds seriously terminal. Like the back of the engine's disconnecting from the front.

"Cobra 1, you're on fire"

"Cobra 1 thanks Range, bit busy with engine problems right now, going straight ahead range heading."

Thanks for the info Frank, as if I cared at that moment. Funny how everything is relative: engine instruments still insist there's nothing wrong, and they're quite steady and constant about it, and there's no fire warning light. So, nothing's wrong, hey. More like: 'I'm a bit busy at the moment, I'll worry about that later - if there's a later'. Fully 10 seconds gone by to this point I'd reckon. Actually, time is standing still for the time being. My mind is preoccupied with possibilities, but the reality is expressing itself: I actually have to have a plan, and fast. I absolutely do not want to part company with Mirage A3-70, but I may not have a choice.

First point: ignore the instruments, do I actually have any power? If so,

is it enough to continue flying? And how do I know? A possible answer dawned on me from somewhere: Mirage 111 minimum drag speed 240kts indicated air speed. If she won't fly level at that speed, she won't fly at all, except down. So let's see, speed's now coming back through about 330, height's going up through 2000, nose now about 10 degrees up.

Plan: climb until slowed to 280kts and below the cloud base; level off and wait for speed to settle; if can keep 240kts, head for base and work out plan B for landing; if 240kts not possible, sayonara A3-70 in as controlled a fashion as possible. I guess about 40 seconds have gone by at this stage. Long story short: we got to 2800 feet, just below the cloud base, and we had 280kts. We just sat there and waited. We didn't have long to wait - the speed needle never hesitated, just went straight through 240 with determination. I thought unmentionable thoughts, decided not to get out then and there but to wait for 2000 feet and 200kts and make a military drill movement out of it. That way would be easier, I thought, just like stepping out of that Caribou a couple of years ago.

We arrive at 2000 feet in pretty short order; revs have now lost a thousand, and the jet pipe temp has also finally come down a bit. No miracles though, and here comes 200kts, all trimmed out and smooth, pull down the upper handle and tuck-in the elbows. Remember: the gunnies are all totally great, but if there's no immediate chute, do it yourself. Don't even think about the seat not working!

"BANG"

The sensation of ejecting wasn't too frantic. A brief blast from the seat cartridges, then a bit of twisting and turning in the not-too-bad slipstream, then the windblast curtain came away in my hands as the parachute deployed and the seat fell away. I happened to be facing the front, so I then had an excellent view of both the countryside and A3-70 as convertible. There she was, looking good as ever: wings level and serene, like butter wouldn't melt in her mouth. I watched her for what

seemed a long time, but was only some seconds, until she finally dropped a wing and then her nose. Her end came not long after, but I didn't want to watch that part. I was at 2000 feet, about one minute's worth of flight distance west of the Saltash targets at an average speed of say 360kts. That put me just west of the Pacific Highway north of Raymond Terrace in an area known as Limeburners' Creek. Not that I knew that then, but I wasn't far away from home, and there was nothing but extensive scrub around me, as far as I could see. Since I appeared sure to come down in the trees, I elected to keep my survival pack attached to my bum, rather than release it on its lanyard (like I might have if going into water). There was reason to regret this one minute and 30 seconds later, when I hit the ground in the resultant near-sitting position at a descent rate of 24 feet per second. I had drifted clear of trees in the last 100 feet and landed next to a jagged, burned-out stump in the backyard of a quite remote farmhouse.

Temporary blackout for me. Definitely never felt anything like it before or since. It was totally gross, and I physically couldn't move, because the body was reacting badly. Anyway, I finally came-to a bit and saw the three other Mirages of my flight circling overhead. I could also see two ladies coming down the backstairs of the farmhouse appearing quite confused about the commotion. They stopped at the bottom when they saw me: clearly a man from Mars, with all this clobber on including helmet. They told me later they thought there must be a military exercise or something going on and didn't want to interfere. Having finally managed to get to my feet, I went over and introduced myself with a brief resume of what actually was going on. They kindly responded with an offer of tea, which I was happy to accept. The Mirages finally departed, having ensured I was up and moving, and within minutes the Huey chopper arrived to take me home. While I was getting aboard, the crewman ran off a short distance and picked up the jettisoned cockpit canopy! Unbelievably, it had paravaned down from 2000 feet and lay about 100m away completely undamaged. I said hi to pilot Dave Champion and crewie (Kym Manuel I think) and thanked them for the very welcome taxi service. A short trip later and we're arriving back at Willy to quite a reception. Word had clearly travelled

fast, and there were lots of onlookers. ACDRE Glen Cooper himself was at the door being most solicitous, and this battered bograt felt quite appreciative. Thence to the sick quarters. And the damned bootlaces.

Conclusion: although no damage to compressor blades, ingestion of unidentified range debris on recovery from live fire pass, causing catastrophic engine damage My view: I agree with 3 Sqn Eng O Al Emmerson: broken turbine shaft. Full revs and temp but no power = no connection back to front. Never mind: after three months off for repair of three compressive fractures of lower back, got flying again in January 1969. Delivered A3-100 (the last single seater Mirage 111) from Avalon factory late January and flew off with the rest of the squadron to Butterworth early February. To more adventures…

Chapter 15

The Booming of Darwin - June 1968

Jack Smith

After the passage of 50 years it is perhaps an appropriate time to rattle another one of the skeletons in my cupboard and relate this tale. The scenario is based on Exercise High Jupiter, the locations are Darwin and Tindal, and the date/time is 23 June 1968 at about midnight and shortly thereafter. I held the exalted rank of Flying Officer, and quite a junior one at that.

3 SQN was deployed to RAAF Tindal, which at the time of this tale was a "bare base" with little more than the runway, taxiways and a tarmac area. All support facilities and accommodation consisted of very basic tin huts located close to the flight line. The proximity to the flight line was an issue which will become evident later on in this story. 3 SQN's role in this exercise was to attack targets in the Darwin area, using the then new Mirage 111O-A, the ground attack variant of the aircraft.76 SQN was deployed to Darwin, it's role being the air defence of the Darwin area using the Mirage 1110-F, the air defence variant of the aircraft (in later years all Mirage 111O-F aircraft were modified to 111O-A standard).

After a work up period Exercise High Jupiter was conducted over the period 20 - 23 June. It so happened that I was tasked to conduct the last raid of the exercise on the night of 23 JUN, the mission being to carry out a medium level raid over the Darwin port area. The tasking message called for a pass over the target area at 20,000 ft at the maximum permissible speed, with a time over target of just after midnight. My aircraft A3-66 was configured with underwing 110 gallon

supersonic tanks, and a centreline 286 gallon drop-tank under the fuselage. In this configuration the aircraft was cleared to 600KIAS/M 1.2, these limits being easily attainable at 20,000 ft. What I blithely ignored was a Headquarters Operational Command Air Staff Instruction (HQOCASI) which stipulated no supersonic flight over land below 30,000ft; when I say 'blithely ignored' it would be more correct to say that I was ignorant of the existence of this HQOCASI. Junior Flying Officers were, after all, only vaguely aware of the existence of HQOCASIs

Just before departing on the mission SQN LDR Ted Radford, who was the squadron Operations Officer (OPSO), suggested to me that, since I was flying the last mission of the exercise, the flight line crew might appreciate a high speed overfly at a suitably low, but safe height when I returned. I filed this suggestion away in the back of my mind and departed on the mission.

On the run in to the target area at 20,000 ft I accelerated to M1.2, and held this speed as I approached the Darwin port area. At this stage I became aware that I was being intercepted by a 76 SQN Mirage, and acquired the aircraft visually as it closed on me from my 7:30 - 8:00 o'clock area. I turned into the intercepting aircraft, and shortly after the turn commenced a "kill" was called on me. If my memory is correct Dave Robson was the pilot, and also a junior Flying Officer. The intercepting aircraft then broke away, and "carved off down the hill", obviously going faster than my M1.2.The net result was a substantial supersonic boom generated by both aircraft being planted on Darwin at about half past midnight.

Unbeknown to me was the fact that the usual noisy minority of the Darwin populace had been "sooking" about aircraft noise and the occasional sonic boom (from above 30,000 ft) associated with the exercise. The Air Officer Commanding HQOC AVM Hennock had arrived in Darwin for the final stage of the exercise, and earlier in the day he had been on local radio assuring the good citizens of Darwin that, while the noise of departing aircraft was unavoidable, there would

be no more sonic booms. The phones now rang hot as the noise complaints came in, and the AVM had a substantial amount of "egg on face".

I meanwhile recovered to Tindal, and as per Ted Radford's suggestion set up for a high speed arrival over the flight line. I flew the TACAN approach profile for runway 14 at about 500 KIAS and veered left of runway centreline approaching minima to overfly the flight line in full afterburner at a suitably low but safe height. I believe the flight line crew enjoyed the visual and sound effects of the "chariot of fire" passing overhead.

Unfortunately, my arrival coincided with a telephone call from AVM Hennock to the CO WG CDR Jake Newham. I don't think the CO was aware of the OPSO's suggestion for the high speed arrival, and was trying to placate the AVM by insisting that I was not an irresponsible hoon, but a conservative young pilot. At this point I passed overhead in full afterburner, and the noise of my arrival was loud and clear over the phone to the AVM who made comments to the effect of 'was that your conservative young pilot I just heard'. More "egg on face", except this time it was the CO's face. I believe the CO was told to ensure that I was made aware of the error of my ways, and to dispense appropriate justice.

There was a satisfactory ending to this episode. I was made aware of the relevant HQOCASI on supersonic flying, and for penance my Mirage was piloted back to Williamtown at the end of the deployment by a 76 SQN pilot, while I "slummed it" in the bowels of a C130. No great hardship really, and justice was seen to be done by a CO who was a thorough gentleman. In case anyone is wondering about the fate of the 76 SQN pilot who intercepted me over Darwin, he was deemed to be an innocent party in my misdemeanour.

PS: I still have a skeleton or two in my cupboard, but I will leave their resurrection to a later date.

Chapter 16

Memories

Allan Brooks

The 1969 Malaysian General Elections were held in the early part of that year which coincided with 3 Squadron's deployment to Tengah, while the Butterworth runways were upgraded.

The outcome of the elections did not please a large portion of the Malay population consequently there were riots mainly in the Kuala Lumpur area and a curfew from 6 pm (1800h)to 6 am(0600h) was enforced throughout the whole country.

I was returning to Butterworth/Penang after my stint at RAF Tengah, on what I think was a special RAAF Dakota flight put on to transport Officers wives back to Butterworth after, I assume, a function put on at the Tengah base.

We left about mid-afternoon and as we approached Kuala Lumpur it was apparent we were making an approach into K.L. I can remember coming low over the suburbs and seeing burnt out vehicles in the streets, no doubt as a results of the riots. We landed at an airport closer to the city, possibly one belonging to the military. It all began to seem very clandestine as we taxied up to a spot, the Dak's door opened by the loadmaster, without the engines being turned off, and, I think, a RAN sailor (I'm sure he was not in uniform), jumped/dragged into the aircraft(I never did find out what it was all about), the door was then slammed closed, the aircraft continued almost without stopping, taxied to the end of the strip and we were off and on our way towards Butterworth

After the flight some of us had to get back to Penang and I can remember standing outside the Penang Ferry Terminal as the curfew time approached waiting for our RAAF transport and we began to attract the attention of the locals because we had newspapers (Singaporean)destined for the Hostel. All newspaper printing/publishing had been banned in Malaysia as the government clamped down on news reporting and the Penang locals were hungry for news but we had to refuse! We weren't selling we were just transporting!

The streets of Tanjong Tokong and Tanjong Bungah were being patrolled by those dedicated British Army soldiers, the Ghurkas, so you never felt unsafe during those quite different times to life in Australia!

Chapter 17

Bezu Ball Problems

Bob Richards

I am reminded of an incident concerning aircraft A3-87. It had been in for a servicing (can't remember which) and after the test flight the pilot (can't remember his name either) entered a u/s in the EE77, " On landing approach the Bezu Ball inverted momentarily". The system was ground tested with no fault found. The aircraft was signed off as serviceable and returned to the flight line.

After the next flight the same u/s occurred. No fault could be found during ground checks but it was decided to replace the Bezu Ball and the aircraft was again signed off as serviceable.

Next flight exact same result. This time the Gyro Reference Unit (GRU) was replaced with the result that after the next flight the same unserviceability occurred. After much head scratching and meetings with the higher echelon it was decided that as the u/s only occurred during approach as long as all the pilots were aware of the fault the aircraft could be flown.

This situation was in force for some time, in fact until the next servicing when the cause of the fault was discovered. I have always wondered if the culprit would come forward (perhaps he will at the reunion). This is what happened.

During the original servicing a fitter (no trade identified) removed an external panel directly above a junction box through which wiring involving the Bezu Ball passed. He dropped a screw, probably

inadvertently, and it lodged in the junction box which as it stood posed no problem on the ground during static checks. However when the aircraft was on a landing approach and the throttle was pulled back to reduce engine revolutions a series of vibrations occurred which caused the guilty screw to move thus making an electrical circuit between two adjacent contacts, which caused the Bezu Ball to invert.

As the engine revolutions decreased further the change in vibrations returned the screw to its original position. The Bezu ball flipped back to its normal orientation and the fault disappeared. I can't remember who actually discovered the errant screw but perhaps he will be identified at the reunion also.

BRAKES

Wayne Beattie

There was some confusion on the flight line in Butterworth when one of our birds while taxiing out turned right instead of left with the rest of the flight.

Apparently the hydraulic pipes under the nose wheel well had been connected back the front resulting in the application of the right brake the aircraft turned left and right with the left brake.

The pilot sat for a moment to analyse the problem and then managed to return to the flight line.

Of course he was somewhat bemused and not at all happy at missing a flight.

Once again, no names have been given to protect the unfortunates involved.

Chapter 18

How Harry (The Head) Howard Got His Nickname

Norm Brown

LAC Harry Howard and I were the two fitters on the advance crew for Operation Thoroughfare. We travelled one day ahead of the aircraft to Townsville, Darwin, Djuanda and finally to Butterworth with the job of marking out the tarmac parking and organisin chocks, oxygen and fuel.

After arriving in Butterworth and completing all our tasks, we decided to visit Penang to sample Tiger Beer and the night life. As you all remember, the first obstacle on this venture was the Penang Ferry.

We travelled up the ramp and entered a type of sheep race that was about twenty people wide at the start tapering down to about eight at the gate. Terry Hill and I walked with the crowd, but Harry being the youngest, joined in the "push and shove" that was common with the locals and ended up getting well in front of us.

Harry being six foot three, and the average Malay being about five foot two, he towered over a sea of black haired locals. Terry said to me "I hope we are going in the right direction". My reply was "JUST FOLLOW THE HEAD".- and for the next fifty years Harry has been known as THE HEAD.

The alternate story about the size of his genitalia is definitely not true and I suspect was invented by Harry himself.

Chapter 19

Life In Malaya

Stan Turner

It's funny thinking back all of those years ago, back to 1969, when I was just a naive 20 year old, (from North Queensland) working at RAAF Base Williamtown, as an LAC Armament fitter, being told that I and many others were being posted to 3SQN and going to Butterworth in Malaya. (as it was called then, Malaysia) I was married with a young daughter, less than six months old, and this posting sounded very exciting.

Time to leave, we all left Williamtown on a Qantas 707 to Butterworth, our short stopover in Darwin was nothing in comparison to our boss Ted Radford. I didn't know, until I read Ted's story on bringing our 21 Mirage aircraft through Darwin to Butterworth, the problems he had. We were fortunate to have Ted Radford as our Commanding Officer.

On arriving in Butterworth, we all boarded buses to go to temporary accommodation. I with my family and many others went to Sandycroft, I think was a British Military leave accommodation place. Funny thing was I didn't mind staying there. A few weeks later my family was allocated a house at 23 Jalan Bunga Telang, on Penang, three bedrooms upstairs, lounge / dining / kitchen downstairs. What was different was the red polish on the concrete floors downstairs. Room downstairs for our Amah, her toilet and washing place. Our Amah was very nice, and I guess all the wives appreciated their help, and would have missed them when they came back to Australia.

Grocery shopping in Penang, is so different to Australia, in my area the RG guy came around daily, to ask for your shopping order, or to pay your electricity bill etc. Only now in Australia you can get your shopping delivered. Up there, Toyota Corollas had 4 doors, (in Australia the Corolla had 2 doors) There were lots of diesel Mercedes taxis (with vinyl seats)

The most listened to Radio Station for us was, Radio RAAF Butterworth, run by lots of volunteers. Great music, news from Aus, such a great story for those involved, and we certainly appreciated the effort they all put in,

Looking back on those days, they were some of the best times of my life, the mate-ship was incredible, work was great. Living on Penang, working at Butterworth, was awesome.

In the two and a half years I was there, I was very proud to be in 3SQN, giving me a unique opportunity to experience living, and working in Asia. One of the funny things that came to mind was when we were on parade one morning, it poured down rain, everyone was soaked, marching off you could see the soap suds, (bubbles) coming off the person in front of us, our clothes were washed by our Amahs and probably not rinsed properly. But I guess small things amuse small minds, and I thought it was funny at the time.

When a big exercise was on, you saw Russian spy ships in the harbour, with many domes and antennas, listening to what was going on.

As a motorcyclist coming and going on the ferry was an experience, all the cars and trucks went in first, then the ferry staff put a chain across to keep motorcycles/ scooters/ push bikes at the rear of the ferry. When the trucks / cars have disembarked, the ferry staff drops the chain, and everyone's off, it's a race to be first off. I know for me it was a lot of fun.

There were plenty of things to do and see in Penang, Everyone bought clothes (tailored to fit), purchased really good stereos and cameras ect. Eating out, going to the cinemas, and for the guys, a haircut and shampoo, being pampered by a nice female hairdresser. Penang was a really interesting place to explore, we always felt safe and could go anywhere.

I found the Cameron Highlands beautiful, a pleasant change, with the cooler weather, old colonial buildings, terraces carved around the hills, where the locals farmed their produce.

The Squadron's deployment to Singapore (whilst the Butterworth Airstrip was being resurfaced) was very interesting as well. The pommie Lightnings fired up early in the morning, making sure we couldn't sleep in. We went to Bugis Street late one night, people everywhere, it was the first time I saw "shims" (Lady Boys). Coming from North Queensland all of that was certainly new to me. The shopping was good, and it was fun negotiating to get a good bargain.

Looking at Penang and Singapore today, I think that we were very fortunate to have lived and experienced the fun and simple times of the late 60's/70's

Life in Penang and Butterworth was good for us all, time went fast and after approx two and a half years it was time to go home. The removalist who packed up our personal effects did a terrific job, and everything was packed professionally. When we got to the Butterworth airbase, you could see the big beautiful Qantas 707 on the tarmac waiting for us, that aircraft looked absolutely terrific. I guess it must have been the right time for me to go.

In 1969 I arrived at 3SQN Butterworth, with my wife and my six month old daughter, there were three of us. On departure, there were four of us, my wife ,my daughter and my son, who was born at the British Military Maternity Hospital in Penang.

Arriving back in Darwin, all of us had the privilege of being sprayed. The hostess, both arms in the air, with two pesticide spray cans, walked down the aisle, spraying the whole cabin. It's good to be back in Australia.

" Welcome Home "

To those people behind the scenes who organised the massive lift of airmen and their families. Relocating aircraft, spares and servicing equipment for all trades from Australia to Butterworth. Finding houses / accommodation for the full Squadron, must have been a massive undertaking. Then when our tour was finished, sending us back home to Australia, to our next posting. You have to hand it to them, all of that organisation without today's computers.

Wow!! What a job they did. Just imagine doing the same thing today, with a new generation of people, who in my opinion haven't got the same drive or work ethic.

These are a few of my thoughts, a lot of time has passed since 1971, when I came home, so I hope my grey cells are reasonably accurate.

Hope all of my work colleagues and their partners look back at this time as one of the best times of their life, as I do. Looking forward to meeting up with you at the reunion next year.

PS,

My time was coming to an end in Butterworth, after two and a half years, the Gunnies of 3SQN, must have thought that I was a "Tight arse

". I had been a good saver and saved about half of my pay. They presented me with "Stanley's First Cent, Tiger Beer Cup", professionally made by them for me, what a wonderful thought.

This cup has always been in a prominent place in my house, and reminds me of those good times we had.

I want to thank all of you for that nice gesture, a simple inexpensive thing like a beer can cup, I still cherish today

Chapter 20

After Work Fun

Ken Moore

Shortly after the Squadron's arrival at Butterworth we were on the move again. We were attached to Tengah, Singapore to facilitate the resurfacing of the Butterworth strip. As you know, Australians are partial to a COLD beer now and then. The beer being served in the Sgt's Mess was NOT cold!! A colleague of mine who was known to partake on a hot day and myself decided that something needed to be done to address this situation. Arriving at the Mess a few minutes early, we cornered the head barman and convinced him that the Brits were heading home and us Aussies were taking over and suggested that if he wished to continue as head barman he would need to adjust the Temprite to a more acceptable temperature for Aussie consumers. He was a little dubious at first but with a bit more gentle persuasion he finally agreed with our request. For the first hour or so of that night, the beer was cold and beautiful ------ the Poms went ballistic and the Temprite was reset to "warmish"

But it was great while it lasted!!

Night at the Movies

After a night of having a couple of beers in Boogie Strazza, a bunch of us were conned into an "Informative Taxi Tour". Somehow, we ended up down at the docks walking across a plank onto a Sampan. All was dark inside apart from a flickering light so we all stumbled into whatever seats we could find. To our utter shock and amazement, the flickering light turned out to be coming from a movie projector which was showing movies of a questionable nature. This brought about some rather blue comments from someone in the gathering only to be answered by a VERY British someone saying "I say chaps, could you please keep the language down - we have our wives here"

Chapter 21

Trading

Huck Ennis

It might have happened after my 8mth tour in Vietnam as a Forward Air Controller; Apr-Dec69.

3Sqn was operating out of Tengah when I received my posting to HQAFV Saigon to work for the 7th Air Force, 504th Tactical Air Support Group; attached to the 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron, flying Birdogs working for the 9th Division out of Binh Thuy? Phew! What a Rigmarole of a Command Chain!

Anyway, I quickly learned that the Americans were desperate to acquire "Souvenirs of War" that were allowed back into the US on Return To America? Particularly the Support personnel! And as the Combat Arm comprised about only 10% of all USl personnel in Country, the market was Huge!

I inherited from Flt Lt Jimmy North, an RAAF AEO cum Operations Officer, 3 Gurkha knives he had left over that he bought for $2 USD in Penang and sold to our allies for $20 USD; sometimes a lot more!! So began a trade!

With the 35Sqn Caribou's needing (??) to deploy to Butterworth for Compass Swings; there was far too much metal in and around Vung Tau (VT), there was an open and regular supply line from VT to Butterworth to VT! To add to this I learned the Yanks hardly used their Ration Card entitlements for Spirits, but exhausted their entitlement for US Beer.

It wasn't hard to gather a collection of Quart bottles of spirits in exchange for some Real Beer, VB or Fosters! These acquisitions would find their way to VT once a month when we Aussies deployed there from our Operating locations to collect our pay in Military Payment Certificates (MPC), which was valid tender in the BXs. So boxes of Spirits went to my Singlies room at the Officers Mess, B'worth8 and boxes of Ghurka knives found their way to VT by return flight!

On my return to B'worth in Feb70, with a Gastro problem post tour, I had amassed some 69 bottles of spirits, an SKS bolt action repeater rifle and an AK-51(with under-slung bayonet) as tokens of appreciation from a couple of US Platoon Commanders grateful for Air Support I had provided in a "tight situation"! I could have traded my 9mm Browning Pistol for either a Birdog or a Huey! But having signed for my V&A item at VT, I felt compelled to return it??

The plan was to have a huge Sqn party to empty my room if its contents? However that never happened as fate intervened and I was medivacced back to Aus on 3 days notice with said Gastro problem, never to return!!

So 'kind-hearted' F/O Sullivan offered to relieve me of my booze, for the price I paid for it, $5 USD each, to help me out of a 'tight situation'? Always the Enterpreneur was Sully! I don't suppose the Party went ahead in my absence?

Never touched the stuff meself!!

PS. Reg Meissner undertook to have the weapons saftied, mounted and displayed in 3Sqn Headquarters, where they were last sighted by me in 3Sqn HQ Willy circa 2002? I thought they should display a short story as to their history, but the items have apparently disappeared? Possibly to No 4 Sqn FAC?

Chapter 22

Burly and the Bat

Grant Archer

It was the end of another long hot day on the 3 Sqn. Mirage flight line at RAF Tengah.

The boys were looking forward to a cool libation, probably at the McGregor club before enjoying the delights of the cuisine at the RAF Airman's mess, 3 types of potato, chips, boiled or mash, greens, 1 type optional.

My motorbike, a Triumph T 50, was being repaired in the local village, just outside the base, after suffering a major mishap while being test ridden by LAC Bob Ramage who thought he might like to buy it. But that's another story.

It should have been ready for pickup that afternoon so Berle Bell kindly offered to run me down to the village on his Tiger Cub. The cub was a great little bike that ran well but had a small electrical problem. If you turned the lights on the engine lost spark. Speedy Peterson was working on the problem but hadn't resolved it yet.

When we got down to the village my bike wasn't ready yet so naturally we went to the next door bar for a couple of beers. After a feed of satays and a few more beers we went back to get my bike. Too late, the shop was shut. What to do? We are only wearing our T shirts, shorts and T boots. Answer, lets go to Bugis street.

The ride in was uneventful and what happens in Bugis street stays in Bugis street. However the trip home was something else.

All went well until we hit the hills before the base. We'd had a couple of incidents before this as Berle would have to turn the headlight on when a car was approaching, which meant the engine pretty well died, then turn the lights off again after the car passed.

No problem , we're now in the dark jungle clad hills. Suddenly Berle starts making very loud verbal exclamations, lets go of the handlebars, and starts clutching at his chest. It appears that a very large and unimpressed fruit bat has become a bonnet ornament on Berle's chest.

Fruit bat does not want to leave. Berle does not agree.

My job as pillion is to try and steer the bike and pray we don't die.

After much persuasion by Berle the bat departs and we settle back into a somewhat shaky return to base.

Of course we went back again the next night to get my bike ... but that’s another story.

Chapter 23

Ball and Chain

Neil Rothery

49 years is a long time ago, but one incident during that posting will remain foremost in my mind and failing faculties forever. I was posted to Malaysia on short notice as a replacement for somebody else who had to drop out. I went over on the charter flight leaving my very upset girlfriend on the tarmac at Williamtown. We corresponded by letters and post cards nearly every day and to cut a long story short, we got engaged and I managed to get an indulgence flight back to Australia to get married and bring her back to Penang with me - Which, except for the firies on base at Butterworth, may not have happened as planned.

The night before I was due to leave for Australia, a few mates (who needs enemies) namely Mick Sibley, Warren Gowland, Stewie Titmarsh and a few others talked me into going to the Merlin hotel for a bit of a buck's party. Little did I know what bastardry they were up to until they pinned me against the bar and locked a ball and chain to my ankle. The ball and chain by the way, consisted of three feet of Dak tie down chain welded to a 25lb, foot long piece of round stock.

My pleading with them that I had to board a Herc for Australia at 7 O'clock in the morning fell on deaf ears and I was offered a cab fare to the ferry and then to the base. I was fairly irate by this time and I told them in no uncertain terms to get stuffed and that I was going to ride my motorbike back. When they realised that I meant it, they strapped the ball and chain to the seat behind me. The bike, being a Trumpy 500 Speed Twin, had a fairly large seat and luckily they tied it on securely enough for me to survive the ride back to the base without maiming

myself or worse - Mind you, it did create quite a bit of curiosity and interest with the locals on the ferry.

Now, their plan was that Mic Sibley would come over from Penang Island with the key to unlock the said shackle in time for me to get ready to board the aircraft. I knew that this was unlikely and if he didn't show up on time there was no way I would be let on board sporting a large ball and chain. As I pulled up at the guard gate with the aforementioned in mind and not being able to get off the bike, I asked the guard to call the guard commander to whom I explained my predicament. He called the duty firies who told me to ride around to the tower where, after a bit of sardonic banter at my expense, they finally cut the bloody thing off with a very large set of bolt cutters.

Would you believe, I was about to board the Herc for home when Sibley finally showed up at Air Movements with the key. I reckon if I'd have had a loaded gun at the time, I would have shot him. Anyway, I guess it was all worth it in the long run, because after almost 49 years and many more life experiences, I am still married to the lady I went back for.

Chapter 24

Guard Duty
Tony Farr

In October/November of 1970 the last of the RAF Security Police pulled out of Butterworth, a couple of weeks before the RAAF ADG`s and their dogs arrived. This meant that we, the troops, were co-opted to guard the flight lines every night until they arrived. This should not have been a problem. After all, most of us would only have to do it one night, the island had been under curfew for around 18 months and some of us had been used to running the curfew every Friday night after basketball for drinks at the E&O hotel without any problems so it appeared that perhaps the situation was not as bad as was being made out.

These thoughts were quickly laid to rest at the briefing we received on the day we were to do our shift. Communist insurgents were known to be operating just across the border in Kedah and just to make us feel better we were told there was the very real possibility that others would be very happy to have an attack on an Australian Air Force base on their resume. The thought that we may be in a situation where someone would have had to fire shots in anger had become a reality. I for one had not had any weapons training or even held a rifle since rookies, over 4 years previously and I am sure there would have been many others in similar situations. This had obviously been taken into account as we were issued rifles but no ammunition for our shift. At the time it seemed a bit scary to think that there may be someone out there in the dark who wanted to do us harm and there really was not a lot we could do to retaliate but with the benefit of hindsight it was a very wise

decision as I could imagine shots being fired at shadows or worse, at anyone coming around to check or change shifts.

The 3Sqn flight line was also nearest the ammunition storage so that also was part of our responsibility to protect. We were told if we saw anyone or anything untoward we were to call out Berhenti, Berhenti, Berhenti. Stop or I will shoot! Obviously the lack of ammunition posed a bit a problem and heaven only knows what we would have done had someone actually been sighted. Fortunately the situation didn't arise, the ADG's eventually arrived and we resumed our normal, if slightly less intimidating duties.

Chapter 25

Losing the Canopy of Mirage A3 - 107

Marty Susans

The Mirage was generally a well designed aircraft, however, one weakness was the long perspex canopy on the dual aircraft which had a tendency to implode under certain flight loads. In Dec '69, I was tasked to fly A3-107 from Butterworth to Tengah to pick up the Air Commander, a two star RAF officer, for Christmas drinks with the troops at Butterworth. Flight Sergeant Bushy Smith was in the back seat to turn the aircraft around at Tengah, and the 75 Sqn dual was in company - just in case.

We were aware that there had been some dual canopy failures in the RAAF, but the manufacturer had not issued any guidance. Not wishing to tempt fate, we selected a flight profile which minimised the pressure on the canopy for this VIP flight. Nevertheless, during the climb out from Butterworth, the canopy suddenly disappeared and there was silence from the back seat. No longer having mirrors to see behind, I feared that Bushy might have inadvertently snagged a black and yellow handle. However, after slowing down, my escort in the 75 Squadron dual, Pete Ring, reported that my back-seater was still there, minus his helmet, covered in blood, and with his seat drogue chute streaming behind the fin.....Right!

We tippy-toed back to base and made a heavy weight landing - I was greatly relieved when the drag chute jerked on deployment, as I did not relish the thought of a barrier engagement with open canopies Bushy was assisted from the back seat with his face covered in dried blood from perspex cuts, but otherwise unharmed and very relieved to be back on the ground. I'll never forget those pearly whites beaming from

what appeared to be terminal face damage. The CO, Ted Radford, was not too pleased when an RAF Lightning arrived a couple of hours later with his nibs on board.

It was clear from the perspex fragments on the floor of the cockpit that the canopy had imploded despite our precautions; but why had the canopy frame left the aircraft? The gunnies, lead by Bob Koger, soon discovered that the canopy jettison cable had been impacted by perspex debris, triggering a jettison. The wind blast removed Bushy's helmet and disturbed his ejection seat drogue chute. Thank goodness we were not required to eject, as the rear seat was definitely suspect. Several months later the canopy frame was recovered from the ulu, confirming our analysis of the incident.

I spoke to Bushy many years later in Port Stephens - he was still smiling!

Back Seat Passenger's Story

Ken (Bushy) Smith

On the morning of Friday, the 5th Dec 1969 the WOFF in charge of maintenance (Darky Clarke) received a call from Air Command to deploy a twin-seat Mirage to Changi to bring the Air Officer Commanding (AOC) up to Butterworth.

I went into Engine Section to look for someone to go on the trip. I could only find one young corporal there, so I put the question to him: "*Would you like to go down to Changi in the twin Mirage to turn it around to bring the AOC back to Butterworth*?" He said: "*No way! I'll fix them, but I'll not fly in them*!", despite being offered the inducement of a day-off in Changi.

So, I said to Darky: "*I don't have too much on, so I could go*

down and turn the aircraft around?". Darky agreed, and that is how I ended up in Mirage A3.107 on that fateful day.

The pilot (Marty Susans) and I took-off from Butterworth without any trouble; however, as we passed through 17,000 feet (at Mach 0.9) the canopy exploded.

As you know, the back-seat passenger sits slightly higher than the pilot, which placed me right in the slip-stream. The force of the slip-stream tore off my helmet, as well as ripping the top of the seat's face-blind, which started the seat's ejection sequence. As it turned out, the seat only moved a little way up. I don't know why it stopped, but I thought that something must have jammed the guide rails.

At that time, I assumed that Marty had initiated the ejection. I was to find out later that he'd thought I'd started the ejection, but neither of us had.

My oxy mask and mic were streamed over my right shoulder; however, because the canopy bow was missing (and the squibs were up) I wasn't game to retrieve my mask & mic for fear of further interfering with the seat's ejection mechanism. As a result, I was unable to talk with Marty, so he had no idea what had happened to me.

I was able to look over the side of the aircraft, but there was nothing but thick jungle under us, and I said to myself: "*seat, please don't go*", because I didn't want to end up in the jungle in a dodgy ejection seat.

Shortly after, a 75 SQN twin Mirage came alongside and I gave the pilot a thumbs-up letting him know that I was OK (except for some facial cuts).

Marty successfully flew us back (slowly and uneventfully) to Butterworth.

My greatest worry was that the seat's main gun would completely fire

with the bump of landing, but thankfully it didn't. When we were down, the armament fitter (Bruce Rolls) climbed up and tried to put the pins in, to make the seat safe. He said: "*I can't find all the pin places!*". I said: "*Bruce, you put in just as many as you can find*". When I finally got out of the aircraft I went over to medical. I ended up with a few sets of sutures above my eye & cheek, and a couple of days off.

Aircraft details:
3 SQN
A3.107
Cabine # 521M1 Mir3 D 260
GAMD/ARG/12/65
Pilot: Marty Susans
Back Seat: Flight Sergeant KW Smith.

Chapter 26

Winning Celebrations

Rod Vladich

The following is an account, as well as I can remember, of an 'AFTER EXERCISE' celebration that the squadron enjoyed, after a military exercise that we took part in 1968 when Jake Newham was the CO. The exercise was a 'MOCK WAR' involving us against the POMS' & 'KIWI'S'. We were based at RAAF Base TINDALL. We won.

As a reward for a fine effort the whole squadron took part in a pleasant day of eating(B/B/CUE??) and drinking at "Katherine National Park".

At the Park is a boat ramp and a boat pier. Tied up at the pier was a flat-bottomed aluminium boat used for taking tourists up the Katherine River to enjoy the scenic splendour of the cliffs and gorges. At the time the tour boat operator was not present and it seemed a waste to have a boat available and plenty of time left in the day but no one to operate the boat.

Due to the abundant availability of tasty beverages and the growing exuberance and desire of a few (about 15 to 20), someone suggested that n we commandeer this very serviceable and fuelled up craft and take it for a jolly up the river – and we did.

About 15 to 20 able-bodied very jolly airmen loaded a large garbage bin full of icy liquid refreshments into the centre of the boat (we needed the weight for ballast) and said men clambered aboard under

the able leadership of SQN LDR Ron Johnsom.

Being crewed by expert outboard motor operators we set off for a tour up the Katherine River.

Along the way we were entertained by expectant crocodiles, excited about the possibility of an early dinner or a late lunch (it was bout 1 pm}

During the tour we encountered our first dead- end; over which we carried our vessel over the rocks and up to another section of the river. We did this 2 times but the river looked too far and we were running out of supplies. So, we reckoned we had had a marvellous outing, stunned by the beauty of the sheer cliff faces and changing rock colours, we began the return journey.

As we approached the pier we were delighted to see that our CO had come to greet us and welcome us back. Standing next to our CO was a a short stocky man who began jumping up and down and cursing and fuming. We surmised that this chap was the tour boat owner.
We Guessed that our CO was going to tear strips off all of us until he saw 'Zipper' at the bow - at this Jake's shoulders slumped and his head bowed.

We, all of us, could see there was a problem, but an enterprising Sergeant from the Electrical trade called for a whip-around and when the tour boat owner took delivery and saw how much cash there was and his boat was made neat and tidy his jumping, cursing and fuming changed to a smile which brought wonderful relief to our CO and a good day was had by all.

Chapter 27

Night in Open Boat

Ken Dunwoodie

On Saturday, October 24, circa early 70's, the 3sqn Airframe Sections Social Club members decided to hire a large motor boat from the Scuba Club and spend the day on Tiger Island, an uninhabited island a couple of miles from Penang. There were about 30 of us and we had a great time on the island. At 4.30pm we packed up our gear and piled into the boat to head for home.

We were all tired, a little sunburnt but in good spirits. On the way back, some of the men traded cans of beer for some prawns with some Chinese fishermen in a fishing boat. About a mile from Penang the motor started to play up and send out billows of black smoke. The boys investigated and discovered we'd run aground on a sandbank and lost the propeller.

It was already getting dark. There was nothing we could do except settle down and hope that someone from the Scuba Club would realise we were missing and come to our rescue.

NO-ONE RECEIVED THE SOS

We tried signalling an SOS with a hand flash light. The message was not picked up. After three or four hours we realised that we just had to face the gloomy prospect of staying there all night. Some of the men had not brought their wives with them on the boat, as they had small children who needed looking after. Naturally they were upset at the thought of their wives worrying.

As fate would have it, it turned out to be cold and windy. It started raining about midnight and didn't stop all night. The girls attempted to get some sleep on wooden seats under the cabin roof, but the men had to huddle up outside in the rain. Having been hot when they left, no-one had brought warm clothes, and the beach towels were all wet.

Halfway through the night the prawns started to go off, and the stench was indescribable. We had to throw them all overboard.

About 7am a RAAF helicopter came over which was obviously searching for us. However, he couldn't have expected us to be so close to Penang as he first flew straight over, despite our frantic waving. Eventually we spotted a motor boat headed in our direction, which we recognised as the RAAF rescue boat. I've never seen a more welcome sight in my life

The wives who had stayed at home had become worried and contacted the service police who organised a search early Sunday morning. Two helicopters and three fixed-wing aircraft as well as air-sea rescue boats joined in the search. Ken had broken some bones in his hand playing softball some days before and Barbara, a former nursing sister, was worried that the damp may have affected their healing, but was unharmed.

Chapter 28

Butterworth Incidents

Wayne Beattie & Ray Hart

The story goes that one of the wives on billeted on Butterworth called the SPs for assistance as she had a gecko in the bedroom

The SPs advised her that geckos are harmless, never the less she insisted that they come

So, being amused by the request they fronted up and to their horror found not a gecko but a water dragon, a rather large local lizard which had taken up residence in the bedroom.
Eventually they carefully removed the reptilian interloper.

How about letting out the history of the squadron cannon??

The one we brought back from Tengah that belonged to the poms? Having shot blasted it and blued it with a new wooden carrier and put outside our HQ and when the poms came to visit and one managed to spy it and said "We used to have one like that but ours weren't as good as yours".

What about the shorts saga?? When an unknown airman threw the poms oily shorts out of our flight hut and almost caused an international incident? Ungrateful bastards, we even offered to wash them for them. They said it was unnecessary as the just picked the first pair of shorts on the rack to wear each day.

As I remember it oil was poured on the troubled waters by

consultation between senior personnel preventing a possible riot.

And who was the airman shot in the bum by the police on Tanjong Bunga for ignoring their requests to stop during the curfew?
I believe he was under the weather while riding his bicycle home at the time.

Of the curfew my wife remembers having the baby food, bread milk and other stuff being delivered each day by military truck and if you wanted anything you had to put a towel out the window for assistance.

Also I remember going across the road for a BBQ during the curfew making lots of noise with the beer bottles and talking loudly to let the Ghurkhas on the corners that you were crossing the road. They used to just smile at us and wave us over.

I hope some of these will resurrect some other memories of our time over there.

Early Postings

Ray Hart

Early 1967 I remember Dan Parfait and myself posted to 3 Sqn, standing on the bare tarmac and joking about not having any aircraft yet.

With Sadness

Ray Hart

A rather sad memory and aftermath of witnessing one of our own aircraft go down. Practicing for an upcoming flying display F.O Karpys plane was very low and almost inverted before ploughing into the ground about two hundred metres away. At the time I happened to be

on guard duty on the front gate at Williamtown late 1967. I was later provided with a plastic bag and ordered to join others in an emu. A minimum flying height was put in place after this accident.

Right Hand Circuits

Ray Hart

Prior to leaving Williamtown I remember our 3Sqn pilots practicing circuits flying in a right hand circuit direction which was opposite to the standard left hand direction. At the time the reasons given were because of security issues for a one time requirement when flying out of Juanda Airport Indonesia.

75 Sqn & 3 Sqn

Ray Hart

Over time some memories have faded, some memories are difficult to assign which Mirage squadron they took place. That situation applies to me. My first posting was from RSTT to 75Sqn as an Electrical Mechanic later back to RSTT for Fitter training then to 3Sqn. I think it was when doing a 'compass swing' in 75Sqn it involved a sparky to manually drive the NC7B to provide the aircraft with electrical power. Manoeuvring the NC7B around in circles and keeping it the correct position relative to the aircraft in all weathers for hours, was not a popular job. I do not know who came up with this great idea but later in 3Sqn this task was unnecessary as the NC7B was towed by a Clarktor with a right angled towing frame. This meant the power plant was always in the exact position needed.

Twin Ride List

Ray Hart

It seem like a good idea to put my name down for a ride in the twin

Mirage. When I saw the aircraft that Bushy had been taken up in taxiing back, minus its canopy, minus his helmet and some bleeding, I changed my mind!

It Smells Like a Chicken

On the flightline it was easy to tell when any returning Mirage had a minor birdstrike. If you stood at either end of the still hot engine you could smell 'chicken'.

A Good Business Deal

Anonymous

When Butterworth was transferred to the Malaysian Governmenin1971, the rumour circulating at that time was that the Malaysian Government purchased the Base for Malaysian Ringgit (MYR) 1, and to ensure that the contract was legal the MYR1 had to be handed over. However, the Malaysia Government representative did not have a MYR1 in his possession and had borrow the MYR1 from his driver – the MYR was equal to A30c

Chapter 29

Stories of Butterworth

Les Harrison

The flight of a lifetime. Flying in an ordinary aircraft was nothing like flying in a Mirage.

I was lucky enough(although some say I was lucky to come back) to fly in the dual at Butterworth back in the early 70's with a well known pilot of the time in 3sqn.

We went to the fitting room for the usual fit up of a flying suit and the brief from the pilot. Remember him saying if I say eject don't say what or you will wear the blast from my seat.

Down to the flight line to be processed for the flight and then out to the aircraft. It was familiar territory for as a sumpy as we got to be in the cockpit often.

Strapped in and ready to go. We were joining 3 other mirages on a Navex around the countryside.

Take off was exhilarating and quite a surprise at the speed and force behind us.

We joined the others for the NAVEX but soon left their course for our own . I remember the pilot saying we are going to fly through the range with two peaks called the witches tits and would I like to take the stick for a fly . Yes what the hell was my response and we were at about 4000 feet and I was told the gap was 6500 feet so climb to that.

Not being a regular flyer and watched a lot of war movies I pulled back on the column and had the pilot exclaim shit not that way.
You could have used the trim button to get there.
A little further on he took control for the rest of the flight.

Fun was yet to come. Barrel roll 5.5g etc. was the order for the next 10 minutes and then it happened.

At a relevant height we started towards the port at Butterworth and at a speed which gave me an idea of the speed at ground level.

The next thing I knew we were over the port and at fairly low level and at a cracking speed. In A.B. we surprised the fishing fleet coming out and every boat from sampan with an outboard to trawlers were in in flow and with the bang a wave struck quite a lot unawares so they were slightly swamped and not amused as I looked back to see arms waving and it certainly wasn't hello.

We returned to the strip to do some touch and goes before the flight was sadly at an end.

We taxied back after a good flight and went to the flight office but I can't remember when the notice came for the pilot report to the squadron C.O. I recollect some service police being around.

I thanked the pilot for the ride and good luck with the C.O.
The pilot was grounded for a month had to apologise to the locals.

You know I can't remember his name. Maybe someone remembers this and can let us all know who it was.

Chapter 30

Work, Tension, Frolics at Clark USAFB

Al Emmerson

In early Aug69, the Squadron was tasked to carry out trials on an ECM pod that the USAF had at Clark Air Base in the Phillippines. Accordingly, on 10Aug69, I and FltLt Bruce Searle deployed to do the trials, with full support, transitting through Phan Rang in two Mirages, configured with 110 gallon super sonic tanks and with 286 gallon tanks on the centre-line, at the height of the Vietnam war. This configuration was selected because the ECM pod would also go on the centre-line and would allow the super sonic tanks to stay fitted..

I recall that we were told there had been reports of some shooting, off the end of the runway. Therefore, I decided to do the normal full after-burner take off but to then do a mini after-burner climb until clear of possible small arms fire. I was told, when we tansitted back through Phan Rang, that this mini-burner climb really impressed the Yanks who were watching. I also decided to do a formation GCA approach at Clark to remove any chance of getting lost due to all the polution.

In addition, I grabbed the offer of a ride in a dual F102A, flown by a Major Pile, doing hi-level snap ups and some general flying on the way home, in a 1.30 sortie, on 12Aug, and I really found the F102 handled very well similar to the Mirage. However, I vaguely recall, after returning from my flight, being told that there were some troubles and issues during a compass swing but I cannot remember any details.

Although the majority of the trial sorties were flown by Bruce Searle, I did fly one of 1.40 duration on 14Aug so I could understand what Bruce was saying in his report. We deployed back to Butterworth on 16Aug69, through Phan Rang. Interestingly, I initially flight planned at Phan Rang for an instrument flight rules (IFR) climb but after sitting waiting for take-off for a long time, decided to avoid returning to the flight line to top-up with fuel by changing to visual flight rules (VFR). We received take-off clearance almost immediately but on the climb both pilots needed to remain fully alert, as we climbed past passenger aircraft and F4s fully loaded with bombs.

Bruce's report, which was actually a formal report from the Squdron signed by me, recommended strongly, purchase of the ECM pod for training and I understand it was acquired.

Tension

Whilst there, Mirage A3-94 required a radar check/compass swing. An American serviceman was detailed to escort the aircraft and maintenance crew to the designated area. On completion, the aircraft and crew were being escorted back, and had to pass by a "hot area" where a number of American F106 fighter aircraft were being held in operational readiness. The area being cordoned off by a rope boundary. It was understood these aircraft were being held, fully armed, as a result of the USAF not supplying air cover on 23 Jan 68 when the USS Pueblo was captured by North Korea for alleged spying in their waters. They didn't want to be caught out again. The Pueblo is currently moored at Pyongyang and is on show near their War Museum.

Seeing that the Mirage would have trouble turning Sgt Dave King lifted up the rope thus enabling the Mirage to be safely turned without causing any damage to the aircraft. Then all hell broke loose. American Military Police appeared from nowhere and took everyone, including the Mirage aircraft into custody.

Woff "Darky" Clark and Sgt Jim Hall arrived at the scene as the MPs had the crew spread over their jeep, legs apart etc. The chief MP, noticing Darky's WOff rank on his shoulder thought he was a ' Bird ' Colonel and kept saluting him.

It so happened that Flt Lt Emmerson was talking to the American Chief of Maintenance, a Brigadier, when he saw in the distance an aircraft tractor approaching at a fair clip. Then he saw the jeep carrying two large Americans with sunglasses and chrome plated helmets in hot pursuit. Jimmy Hall stopped the tractor and said "Sir, ahh, excuse me Sir, they've arrested 94. The jeep arrived and the two chrome plated MPs tell the Brigadier " these guys went right through the alert pad..Sir". The Brigadier sorted them out and peace resumed.

Leaving Clark, and looking back, a sea of B47s, F4s, F102s, and F106s could be seen with many of them wearing " Red Kangaroos".

It later came to light that the American serviceman escorting the maintenance crew and the Mirage was sent back to America the next day.

Frolics

The Officer, Commanding Clarke AFB, turned on a function to welcome us and in the course of the evening we met quite a few of the officers including a vivacious Captain and one of her colleagues from the military hospital. That is, she should have been vivacious but was suffering serious depression in consequence

of her duties at the intensive care department of the military hospital, watching the procession of broken bodies. Thinking back, she was the embodiment of the unseen damage the war did to the soldiery.

The novelty of having two Australian junior officers vying for her attention sparked her up for a while, so much so that a day or two later there was an occasion where banter became braggadocio on the relative merits of Californian and Australian wines and a challenge was issued along the lines - "If we can produce some Australian wine tomorrow night, you ladies agree turn on a venue and the cheese and bickies and we'll have a party".

Thinking we had no chance, Australia being several thousand miles away, they readily agreed. I had been no more than an onlooker in these adventures so far but was a willing party to the challenge because I knew that our supporting Herc would arrive from Butterworth the following afternoon. All we had to do was send a signal to Butterworth. There was a bit of a snag though because our visit was about matters of some secrecy, the USAF officer; nominated as our liaison officer and by whom any signal we wanted to send would have to authorise, was a security intelligence Colonel. The EQUIPO, John Gildersleeve, had already exercised this channel, but we could hardly ask the Colonel to authorise a signal about booze.

I wish we had kept the signal the Colonel signed. It went something like this:

"FOR OC RAAF BUTTERWORTH
FROM SECINT CLARKE AFB
PRIORITY EOS
PRECEDENCE DEFER
UNCLAS
FOR T/CO 3SQN FROM SENGO STOP REQUEST URGENT
OPERATIONAL SUPPLIES STOP FLUID DEWATERING WHITE

NON HYGROSCOPIC BAROSSA260Z QTY SIX

LUBRICANT DRY HUNTEREAD DOQ BTLE QTY SIX STOP END"

The signal arrived on the Orderly Room Sergeant's desk. He couldn't make any sense out of it. He took to the A/CO Sqn Ldr Johnston, who scratched his head, took a couple of puffs on his pipe, made some queer noises and all of a sudden his eyes lit up.

Up to the Mess in the car, back to the tarmac with the contraband, just in time for it to be loaded onto the Herc before doors closed.

Those who attended the party said the ladies were rather impressed.

Chapter 31

Dyak Headhunter

Ray Hart

After a Hercules flight from Darwin the ground crew I was part of, landed at Djuanda Airport Indonesia, staging for refuelling of the Mirages coming later.

Brown skin, a feature of my South Sea Islander and Aboriginal heritage had attracted some attention over the years, mostly good. One was an entry written in my RAAF Medical Records from Williamtown stating 'this member has an excessive tan'.

Unknown to me at that time this 'excessive tan' was to play a part in the Mirage refuelling stopover at Djuanda Airport Indonesia. As part of the turnaround crew we had marshalled the aircraft ready for refuelling, then waited. Later, I remember watching an old Russian refuelling tanker engulfed in a moving cloud of exhaust smoke approach us. Once the tankers were in position ready for refuelling I was distracted by a commotion centred near me.

Apparently the RAAF tanker driver had told the local Indonesian crew that I was a Dyak head hunter. They were immediately struck with fear. I was told later they withdrew and stopped carrying the refuelling hoses, effectively ceasing fuelling operations.

At the time I was unaware of any headhunter reputation. I only carried a yellow handled common screwdriver for use with fuel caps, never the less they feared decapitation from me. Three or four armed Indonesian

troops became involved and politely encouraged me to move away from the aircraft. Despite them carrying machine guns they recoiled in fear if I happened to make any sudden move.

Recently, I had been informed by George Spriggins, also on the turnaround crew, that the local Indonesian crew were incapable of completing the refuelling operation because they believed I was a headhunter. He also said that whilst I was away and in the company of the armed guards everything else returned to normal. Further, he added that our Engineering Officer ordered me to leave the tarmac and go and sit in the Hercules and 'read a comic'.

Chapter 32

Crisis at Djuanda

Harry Howard

In February 1969, as a member of 3 Squadron (LAC INSTFITT), I was part of the advance crew on Operation Thoroughfare who arrived at Djuanda Naval Air Base at Surabaya, Indonesia to facilitate the transit of 21 Mirage aircraft to Butterworth.

We arrived at Djuanda the day before the squadron was due and set about surveying the tarmac and ensuring that the allocated area was ready for the arrival of the jets. Power carts, chocks and ladders were unloaded from the RAAF C-130 and placed in position in readiness for the squadron arrival from Darwin.

I was on the refuelling team and during the refuel of one particular aircraft, I noticed that there was a large volume of fuel spreading out over the tarmac. I quickly shut off the fuel nozzle and found that the tank was leaking badly from a lengthy, oval shaped hole on the bottom of the tank about one metre long. On checking the tank on the starboard side, we found the same damage. Clearly, the aircraft had landed with too high an angle of attack and had scraped the drop tanks on touchdown at Djuanda, grinding the oval-shaped holes in both tanks.

We continued to refuel the internal tanks which from memory would have been about 600 gallons plus the gun bay tank (72 gallons) giving a total of 672 gallons. As the drop tanks were damaged and had been removed from the aircraft, we wondered how the jet would continue to Butterworth in a ‘clean’ configuration. As it turned out, SQNLDR Bob Walsh strapped in and the aircraft was towed to the runway threshold where it was lined

up on the runway, the engine started and using minimal power, it took off for Tengah Air Base, Singapore to arrive safely in the rain. Nicely done!

Ray Hart comments

Upon landing at Surabaya one Mirage aircraft sustained damage to both drop tanks and had to be removed. The challenge then was to get this bird to Butterworth without long range fuel tanks.

It had been decided to fly clean skin. One pilot, Sqn Ldr Walsh had a reputation of efficient fuel use. I think perhaps he did this by trimming aircraft attitude and throttle setting. This situation called for such skills and Sqn Ldr Walsh was chosen to do it.

To conserve fuel normally spent on taxiing, we towed his aircraft to the end of the runway. Walsh was sitting in the cockpit during towing, not just riding the brakes but readying to fly to Singapore. I remember being on the ladder assisting him with strapping in, admiring his focus on the task ahead.

With the aircraft already lined up on the runway, he lit up and wasted no time before rumbling down the runway for take-off in max dry, no afterburner.

Chapter 33

An Adventure in Butterworth

Chris Farr

Twenty days after my 18th birthday my husband Tony Farr and I embarked on an adventure that would change not only our life together but would also change me as a person.

Tony and I were married in August 1968 and immediately moved to Mayfield as Tony had been posted to OCU at Williamtown. We settled into our life in Newcastle and our flat became a bit of hangout for Tony's single mates. I had found a job in a smallgoods manufacturers' office in Islington and Tony was loving it at OCU.

Two weeks before Christmas Tony came home with the news that we were going to Butterworth and biggest news of all we were leaving in seven weeks. As I am a person who like things to be organized I could not see how this was going to happen. We needed passports, inoculations, we needed to get all our belongings back to Sydney, terminate the lease on our flat, all in seven weeks with Christmas taking about two weeks out of that due to Government shutdowns in passport etc.

Hardest of all was telling our families that we were going 3000km away for three years. Tony's parents were very understanding and supportive as most country kids have to leave home to get work. Telling my parents was a different matter. I was their protected and naïve little 17 year and my mother in particular took it as a personal insult that I

would contemplate such a move and told me I could stay at home and wait until Tony came home. FAT CHANCE!!!! This little Catholic schoolgirl who, until she met the cute Air Force dude was going to be a nun, was already hyped up and looking forward to the adventure of seeing the world (or at least part of it).

The next seven weeks passed in a flurry of activity with visits to the base for passports and jabs, paperwork galore and organising movement of all our furniture and things that were not going with us. All the things we wanted to take to Butterworth had to be packed for overseas transport. The professional movers came in and packaged all our possessions into crates for shipment. When I asked how long it would be before we got them the shoulder shrugging answer was "couple of months". My reaction to this news was not particularly positive but with Tony's usual calmness prevailing I finally decided to go with the flow.

Then we had to pack the things we would be taking with us and of course due to the large number of people on the plane the amount of luggage we were allowed was quite restricted. Finally, of course, came the obligatory round of visiting all the relatives before we went. My mother was insistent on this as she was sure that I would be kidnapped by the Communists or taken away by white slave traders.

The morning of our departure arrived, our small one bedroom flat was so full of people who had come to say goodbye that you could hardly move inside. As our families were doing the final clean out on the flat and handing in the keys we were able to just leave it all behind when the Commonwealth car came to pick us up. As we sat in the car heading to the base I was not sure whether I was excited or terrified but my first sight of the 707 ramped my excitement factor to 100%.

My first memories of South East Asia were when we touched down in Singapore. We had a stopover and were allowed to get off the plane although of course we were restricted to the airport.

As I reached the top step to leave the aircraft I felt the heat and humidity hit me in the face and my first thought was, "Oh God, is it really going to be this hot". After our stopover we continued on to Butterworth. Once again the heat hit me when we left the aircraft but as it was later in the day it was not as overpowering and I started to think that maybe it would be OK. Then we were loaded onto buses (more closely resembling cattle trucks than buses to my eyes) and taken to Penang. This involved the trip from the base to the ferry terminal with unbelievable sights opening my little eyes wide. There were motor scooters with whole families on them, pushbikes being ridden with large baskets of chickens or bales of hay on them and they were all competing for the narrow road with our buses, lots of cars and people everywhere. There were people washing clothes in these huge drains beside the road and people drinking from the drains and also people using the drain as a toilet. This was all so foreign to me that I went on sensory overload and just could not absorb any more. Then we hit the ferry and my whole being was assailed with more sights, smells and sounds than I could process. At this stage I was still thinking of the whole thing as an adventure but the excitement was waning fast.

Once we left the ferry terminal and started driving through Georgetown I began to believe that maybe it would not be so bad at all when I spied the Merlin Hotel and a lot of modern buildings. Then we drove past the E&O Hotel which was the most beautiful old colonial building and the waterfront in front of it and I thought to myself this place may be OK, I can see myself having high tea in there!

Once we were on the buses they explained that, due to the large number of us arriving with 3 Squadron a lot of the married quarters were not yet available and that we would be staying at the British Services holiday resort called "Sandycroft". Suddenly things did not seem so bad, we were going to a resort which I pictured as something like the Merlin or the E&O hotels. Our arrival at Sandycroft put paid to that idea!! When we left the buses all we could see was multiple long

hut like buildings that looked like they belonged at Holsworthy Army base. They allocated us our rooms and we headed off eager to see where we would be living for the next few weeks. On opening the door we were greeted by the sight of two single beds, two bedside tables, a chair, a lamp and a ceiling fan. The walls finished about 2 feet from the top and the rest was open mesh. I immediately burst into tears and wailed "I want to go home, I want my mother". Pete and Sandy Chappelow were in the room next to ours and they had only been married the night before we left. Sandy's reaction to the whole situation was similar to mine and I remember hearing quite a few unfavourable reactions from around the area. With open top walls privacy was not really an option!

We decided that we had to make the best of things so started to make the place more livable for ourselves. We moved the single beds together, reorganised things in the room to make it more comfortable and unpacked our things. By this stage I had calmed down a little and was having a bit of fun making the room "ours" when it happened.

I looked up to see this giant lizard (you have to remember I am a city girl) climbing the wall. I screamed and was trying to go through the closed door to get out when Tony explained that it was a ghecko and that it was a good thing as they eat the insects in the room. After my heart rate had returned to normal I was lying on the bed reading when I noticed this huge bug flying around the room. After the ghecko incident I decided to remain calm and just see if we could convince it to leave. Tony and I were chasing this thing around the room with tennis racquets when the bug decided it had had enough and left. We laughed about it and settled back to our reading. Tony was reading some of the information that was in the room for the British holidaymakers and turned to me and said "Hey, doesn't that look like the bug that we were chasing around the room?" "Sure does" I said and proceeded to read over his shoulder that this bug was extremely deadly if it bit humans.

At this point my suggestion that I was going home on the next available aircraft became both very loud and extremely unreasonable. Tony had no idea how to handle the screaming banshee that was dressed in my clothing and in his usual implacable way suggested we go the bar and have a drink. I was perfectly happy to go anywhere to get away from the deadly creatures in our room.

When we entered the bar we noticed that a large number of the people who had come in on the buses with us were in there. Quite a lot of the wives looked to me to be in the same state of shock that I was in but as is usual with RAAF wives by the end of the night we had pretty well settled down as we realised that everyone was in the same boat and if we shared the adventure we could get past the lumpy spots.

This continued after we finally left Sandycroft for our own homes. A large number of us were moving to one street, Jalan Bunga Telang which ran off Jalan Gajah. When they took us down there we saw these big two story semi detached houses which were to be our homes for the next three years. Outside all the houses were a sea of local people looking for amah jobs. The idea of a house servant was totally foreign to me as I was from a pretty poor family more used to being the cleaner than having one, (just one more part of the learning curve). Our amah became a part of our family and we were invited to visit her home in the Kampong. I marvelled that families with so little could be so happy and so willing to share what they did have.

Bunga Telang became a close knit community, supporting each other through life's joys and sorrows when we were so far away from our families, the boys all played basketball, volleyball or football together, we all played sport at the RAAF Club, went to Beetle, Mah Jong, Crocheting Classes and many other activities, we banded together when the boys were on detachment, had excellent street parties in the cul de sac at the drop of a hat, went to Restaurants and places that Europeans normally did not frequent and met the real people of Penang, shopped in the fabulous Georgetown including the bra shop Titman and Co. (did

not believe that one until I saw it for myself), travelled around Malaysia and up in Thailand, lived through the curfew when the riots were on and our street was guarded by Gurkhas and tried to understand when the Communists left red flags around and the country was living in fear of a Communist uprising.

What we experienced and shared during our time with 3 Squadron in Butterworth has left an indelible mark on all of us. I still get a thrill every time I see a Mirage, take great pride in the new 3 Squadron and it's amazing new aircraft and oh so young serving members, marvel at the way that although we may not see other for years we quickly fall into a comfortable camaraderie when we do meet and feel great sadness as the passage of time means that more and more of our happy band pass on to the big Squadron in the sky. My pride will never diminish in this band of very young, innocent RAAF wives who became strong, self reliant women supporting our husbands while they served their country.

Chapter 34

My Rememberance of Our Move to Butterworth

Roger (Hap) Pryor

.My first memories are of my family packing stuff to go into storage and deciding what to keep and what not to. Then there was terminating our rental agreement, fortunately with no penalties, selecting suitable clothing for Malaya and queuing at the medical section for innoculations, which were not appreciated by five year old and a six year old boys. The night before we left Williamtown, the married blokes slept on gymnasium tumbling mats in a hangar. Some had consumed various quantities of sleeping potion as a parting gesture. Then it was up early ans it was ON.

I happened to be one of the "fortunate" ones who travelled to Butterworth "Luxury Class" in the belly of a Herc which was loaded to the roof with a complete spare engine - complete with trolley. Added to that was a full load of brake parachutes, pie carts, plus other essential equipment, but all that aside, it was an exciting and history making time for us and the Squadron

We left Williamtown in time to be in Townsville to receive, re-fuel and replenish all aircraft, then send them on their way to Darwin. After a couple of days in our tropical north checking, replenishing, re-fuelling (including ourselves), again we left in time to be in Djuanda Indonesia to repeat our efforts of Townsville.

While we were there, one of the aircraft landed a bit heavy and scraped a hole in the bottom of the big jugs (long range fuel tanks). The tanks were removed and taken to the far corner of the tarmac and

close to the perimeter fence of the airfield.

This meant that aircraft had to continue on with no external fuel tanks (Cleanskin). With fuel so critical, it was towed to the end of the runway before starting up again, as this avoided burning fuel by taxying. The late Bob Walsh took over the seat in this aircraft and as we all know, he did a great job and got there.

I was given the task of removing the mounting, pylons and dump valves from the tanks to take with us so that all that was left was empty shells. While I was doing this, I happened to look up and saw a coolie stand up in the rice paddy just the other side of the fence to take a peek at us. Just then a security guard (probably Indonesian Army) came along and smashed the butt of his weapon, perhaps an AK47, into the side of that coolie's face, dropping him like a sack of spuds. I sometimes wonder whether the poor coolie lived or died that day

Once again we re-loaded the Herc and continued our journey to Butterworth. On arrival, as the loading ramp was lowered, a yellow Kimbi Crew van drove up and some knucks jumped out and unloaded some cartons of cold Tiger Beer for us. Unfortunately, I can't remember who they were, but as by now we were completely knackered, this was a very much appreciated gesture. This was just part of what made this Squadron such a great place to be

The wives and children arrived by 707 a couple of days later and during this time we sorted out our hanger and equipment. Then it was over to the Island to see our home and select an Amah (What good fun!!).

Chapter 35

The Lead Up and Our Time in Malaysia

Helen Brooks

When Allan came home with the news that he had a posting to 3sqn with a further posting to Butterworth within 12 months, it was received with some excitement. In February 1968 we moved from Laverton married quarters to a neat little flat in Nelson Bay, in what turned out to be one of the nicest places we ever lived in in our time in the Air Force.

The 12 months seemed to race by and Christmas 1968 saw us decide to make a dash for Perth to see the rellies in case a posting to Butterworth came up early in the new year. We left on a Friday (20/12) as soon as Allan arrived home, and drove through the Blue Mountains on to Hay where we had a picnic lunch in the park and a temperature approaching 40 C. We spent a night in a motel and then almost nonstop on to Perth. 53 hours later we arrived at my parents house. All done on just a few of hours sleep and the rest was driving and in those hours it was dirt from Ceduna to Norsemen with only a couple of patches of sealed road and this was in a VW beetle with 2 kids as well! Two weeks later on our way back we split 2 rear tyres. No credit cards in those days, we had to go to the bank branch (fortunately it was a week day) in Port Augusta and convince the manager, not always the easiest, who after he viewed our passbook gave us the cash for the tyres and then just before Port Pirie we had our windscreen shattered

When Allan went back to work he found that our posting was now on and then began a period of passport photos and BCG injections and all the others. This was not as easy as one might think as we had 2 young

children, 3 year old and a 15 months old, and both hated needles, a lot of screaming. Before we left, Allan had to sell the car, the local car firms were not offering much so Allan went to Sydney for a reasonable price, but in the end no one is going to give you any more than they have too.

The day eventually came and we packed our bags and an early morning cab call picked us up to drive to the base. Our flight was a strange one as there were only 2 or 3 men on board, the rest were wives and children. Nappies ran out before we landed in Darwin and there was a further stop at Singapore, probably for refuelling (or maybe nappies) before we finally arrived in Butterworth late that afternoon. After going through all the paperwork we were put onto buses for our drive and ferry ride to Penang. The first impression I received and can still remember is the smell as we drove through Butterworth village.

On arrival at our new accommodation we were met by one of Allan's work mates and he helped us to negotiate an Amah, insurance and ID card for me.

From here we could relax and enjoy our posting. I was very determined to enjoy myself, as having two small children I really appreciated the value of an Amah who cleaned, ironed (I hate ironing) and best of all, a built in babysitter. This of course meant I could join the RAAF Women's Ass. and play sport 5 days a week, learnt Chinese cooking, doing drafting courses for dressmaking and enjoy relaxing at the Penang Swimming Club. I must admit that I made the most of our stay in Penang. The friends we made there are friends we have to this day. The holidays to Singapore, Cameron Highlands and Songkhla were a nice break.

Every morning RG's, our food store(they could get you almost anything, even the contraceptive pill [needed]) would send someone to pick up the order for the day which was then delivered later on, no going to do grocery shopping. The book man (mobile library) came to the gate which I really appreciated as I was an avid reader. Fresh fruit

from all over the word, the list goes on. Then of course we had the Hostie where we socialised and played sport, this took up most of my mornings and this was great as you knew the children were well cared for.

Not long after our arrival the squadron was sent to Singapore and soon after the local elections caused some problems and we were confined to our homes. I recall an officer coming to inform me to stay indoors and if I needed help to hang a towel over the front gate, fortunately this I never had to call on. I was also reassured by the close presence of the British Ghurkha's, many of them living nearby in Jalan Gajah.

We were one of the lucky ones as we stayed in Penang for a week short of three years and it was sad to leave our amah Anne, yes we had her for the 3 years and she even put off her wedding until we left!

Coming back to Australia was hard especially for me as I had to go back to cleaning, washing, ironing and no built in babysitter.

Looking back after all these years I would have to say they were some of the best years of my life! I really did appreciate my time in Malaysia.

Leaving for Butterworth, at Williamtown.

Our house in Penang.

Off on a bike ride

Chapter 36

A Three Year Honeymoon

Peter Chappelow

In October 1968 CO 3SQN, Ted Radford, called me with a dilemma - I had already been warned for a posting to 3SQN and Butterworth but he advised that I had now been also warned for a posting to 35 SQN (Vietnam) in early 1969.
He "suggested" that I take the first option!

I agreed, despite having already planned to marry my fiancée Sandy on 22 February 1969. ADMINO and Blue Farrell said it might be possible to do so before deployment but was really stretching the friendship!

3SQN subsequently departed for Darwin and Butterworth on schedule and two days later we were married, with Rev Wheatley passing over Sandy's passport (in her now-married name) at the completion of the ceremony.

All went well but as the B707 support aircraft was departing WLM at 1000 the next day the honeymoon was necessarily short!

3 SQN Butterworth was a great posting and a three year honeymoon and we will celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary on 22 February 2019, still happily married with two children and four grandchildren.

Chapter 37

A 3 Squadron (3 Sqn) Story

Linda and Vic Edwards

It's 50 Years since 3 SQN moved to Butterworth in 1969. It was a different era. Leaving home, that was leaving Australia for Malaysia, would be like leaving to live at Antarctica or on the Moon today. The posting was between eighteen months and three years - and at the start squadron members did not know how long they would be there. (This was in order to leave a smooth transition for our replacements.) And there was no going home to see family during the posting. It was more a case of family coming to holiday with you in an exotic destination, if they could afford it. Home and family in Malaysia became the Squadrons at Butterworth. But thats getting ahead of our account.

Once posted into 3SQN at Williamtown you were pretty much assured of going to Butterworth with the Squadron. I was a part of the young testosterone driven trades people - not to say the other teenagers in other musterings were not equally driven. For me that meant the friendship ring the engagement ring and the wedding ring were each presented around a month apart if Linda was to accompany me to Butterworth.

The Squadron departed Williamtown with the mandatory number of 20 single seater jets and the dual seater A3-107 in which I was fortunate enough to have a Mach run towards the end of my tour in Malaysia. Before we left Australia, an original allocated Mirage had shot itself down on the Salt Ash range and was replaced. This crash was memorable because I was on the recovery team that went out to the

crash site in the forest. I have been reminded that the squadron had lost two aircraft before we left for Malaysia. A second dual seater aircraft had accompanied the Squadron to Darwin in case any problem arose with the 3SQN duel. In Malaysia, the squadron also operated one of the aircraft with a reconnaissance nose for spooky work.

There was a one day window to fly the aircraft into and out of Indonesia. The transit flight, 50 years ago, we are now celebrating, was fairly uneventful. I recall changing a start valve on one aircraft in Darwin - a job that took longer than normal because one damn screw refused to start, and to drop it meant rolling an engine back. This was a job that was done sight unseen through a number of panels on the side of the airframe. Another memorable event was the cleanskin which flew out of Indonesia when one of the young pilots scraped holes in the drop tanks on landing. Enough was said about that in the flight-line tent.

The charter flight for the wives and children of the members was an event in its self. An early morning arrival at Williamtown Base, along with many family and friends in attendance to bid us 'goodbye', not knowing exactly how long we would be away. Weaving from one table to the next - immunisations check, passport check, seating allocation, then one continuous line up the stairs and into the aircraft. (What seems commonplace travel today was a somewhat scary adventure then.) The QANTAS 707 was filled to capacity with wives, children and Squadron personnel who had not been part of the Mirage transit flight.

The aircraft refuelled in Singapore then flew the short hop to Butterworth where the young husbands and fathers were eagerly awaiting their significant others. Placed on buses we were then off to the Hostel on Penang Island for interim accomodation. Driving through Kampongs on the way I did wonder what sort of house we might be living in!

Drivers licence and identity cards had to be obtained from the town hall in Penang as soon as possible after arriving in Malaysia.

Shortly after arriving at Butterworth, the Squadron took the Mirages to RAF Tengah, Singapore to operate while the airstrip at Butterworth was resurfaced. At Tengah an interesting memory was an air incident which saw an RAF Hunter aircraft glide back to Tengah and perform a dead stick landing. This was memorable because of the long time it took between knowing what was happening and sighting the aircraft.

These detachments were at a time when riots in Penang led to a 24 hour curfew; where milk and bread was delivered to the door for the families, all while the men were away in Singapore.

Work Routine

The routine of the Squadron revolved around the flying requirements. For maintenance personnel the work became a routine for a multi role fighter squadron; little different to operating in Australia; with the exception the aircraft were washed more often in the tropics - no special flight line shelters for these aircraft in those days.

For the maintenance elements of which I was a sumpie (Engine Fitter) there were four locations in which we rotated. Flight Line; where we started off working in shorts until we were all forced to wear our overalls in the tropical heat - for safety we were told. While the jets were out we whiled away the time mainly playing cards or darts in the Flight-line Hut. For the sumpies when an aeroplane returned it meant jumping into the right Wheel-well, hooking up the Oil Dolly and pumping fifty something times for a routine 50 minute flight. The Atar engine had a consumable oil system.

Three Squadron had two hangars in which the aircraft had either minor or more extensive maintenance. For sumpies this most often meant rolling an engine back, which required shoving you hands in various openings along the airframe to work somewhat blindly undoing the many connections then in reverse to put an engine back into the airframe. Cross threading a pneumatic hose was to be avoided. Tea breaks and lunch time saw many while away this time on the makeshift volley ball courts.

For sumpies in the Squadron a rotation into the Engine Repair Section (ERS) was a coveted position for a few months.

The married members mainly lived on Penang Island. Our home was a cement rendered duplex with grates across windows and doors for security. I do recall arriving home from a party right on curfew after having left the house keys behind. It took no time at all to climb onto the roof, remove some tiles and climb down through the manhole to open the house from the inside. So much for security! We can't have been bad tenants because the Chinese owners turned up with a small gift for us as we were leaving.

Life pretty soon became a routine that ran to an inflexible bus timetable - missing your bus in the morning meant a mad dash by whatever means to get to the ferry. While missing the evening bus home meant a long wait to catch a later bus - there was often a flurry of activity to shut down the squadron for the day. For those of us who flew on the top deck of the ferries it was off the buses onto the ferry then off and onto buses on the other side of Penang Harbour - the reverse in the mornings. Night-flying programs had their own buses waiting after these sorties were put to bed - but because of the length of the days in the tropics often the only thing missing for night flying was the night.

Sport

The social fabric for many revolved around sport. For me this was primarily Rugby Union. I played in the Penang Island team, the Saints, whose Jerseys were donated by the Saints Rugby League club in Australia. After the British departed SE Asia, a Rugby League competition was also introduced. Inter-squadron rivalry saw an Australian Rules game organised and I also played in the lunch time Soccer competition. For a person who never played organised sport in my life, I was in heaven. On one occasion I played in the Rugby seven competition in Kuala Lumpur - memorable because we arrived after the night curfew had started and ended up with a police escort to the barracks where we were billeted.

The British had introduced Hash House Harriers or hash running, which I found interesting and challenging and good training for football. Running through the jungle and rice paddies was a social event with false trails - though some runners were competitive, ensuring they were at the front at the finish; possibly because there was a refreshing 50/50 drink of Ginger Beer and Tiger waiting. All manner of sports facilities were available at Butterworth. Beside football I learnt to play Badminton and Volleyball.

Sport was also an essential part of the Penang life style for the wives, with husbands away from home up to 12 hours a day and initially not having children it was sport and other social activities including Mahjong, Beetle and classes on how to craft bead hand bags - anything to make a day go quickly until that bus arrived in the afternoon.

I had been a Badminton player in Newcastle and quickly found competition with other wives and locals playing up to three days a week. Volleyball and Tennis were to fill in the rest of the week. The wives were always busy. Becoming a player in the town competition was a lovely way to mix - very exciting despite the sheep stations that were sometimes at stake.

Local culture

We were somewhat insular to the local community, but nevertheless it was there to see and participate if we wanted. The Thamel celebration of Thaipiusam which for the onlooker was a cringing but bloodless sight of body piercings. Taken to extreme, used to pull carts, carry religious displays, or pears ones mouth from cheek to cheek, to honour the gift of a spear from one of their Gods to another. On another occasion there was fire walking to which the Hillside neighbourhood were all invited. Visits to the Reclining Buddha and other temples were all a part of the experience of immersing ourselves in the local cultures.

The weekly fresh vegetable market shop was always an adventure. On arrival, the routine was to look two chickens in the eyes while feeling

their breast meat, only to return at the end of the morning to place their limp and featherless carcasses in the shopping bags. Carrying the shopping home on the Vesper was always a challenge.

I remember the market days were a highlight, more of a social event, mixing with the locals while choosing fresh seafood, vegetables and chickens. For most everything else, the local supermarket at Hillside delivered. There was also the veggie man in his three wheel motor bike cart, the book man, the bread man and even the snake charmer . They plied their trade door to door. (The milk vendor we were discouraged from using because of TB in the local cattle.)

The social life in Penang included the Ambassador, the Eastern & Oriental, the Eden and other local cafes. These were all memorable social gathering places. Shopping in such an exotic places like the Oriental Emporium was a dream with everything oriental, and it was on a TV in a shop window where we saw man first walk on the moon.

Some entertainment revolved around events at the Hostel. We often had Aussie stars, like Little Patty, Cole Joy and others whose names escape me, perform for us on their way up to entertain the troops in Vietnam.

It was a new outfit for each special occasion. Having clothes made to fit by Richard the Tailors' at Hillside was good and bad. A design could be shown to the tailor and two days later the outfit was ready. But as we were measured each time you didn't necessarily realise that the sizes were changing. We also had hand made shoes - a real treat. (I cringe to look at photographs showing some of the outfits I had made.)

Having family so far away the snail mail was the only way to keep in contact and one day a week was dedicated to writing to family and friends about our exploits and adventures in Penang. We did pay for my 18 year old sister to come for a visit, and mum and an auntie also visited.
We both turned 21 while in Malaysia. I ordered a cake to celebrate Linda's - it was based on a seven pound fruitcake I had seen at another

21st. The one I ordered was a seven pound sponge cake - needless to say it was memorable for its size. My mother, on the other hand, had sent a home made fruit cake from Australia for my 21st. We had to drive out to Customs at the Airport and pay sugar tax before we could have the cake!

Transport

For trips into Georgetown from Hillside we mainly used the local buses. The main mode of transport for shortish trips was to use a Trishaw with the price negotiated before the start of a journey. A memorable ride for us was a trip to my favourite street where there was shop after shop of tools. Most of those I bought I still have. On that occasion our trishaw was cut off by a Taxi. The exchange between driver and trishaw peddler saw our man grab a long steel lever from somewhere on the trishaw while we disappeared, without paying, into the growing crowd of bystanders.

There was an entrepreneurial car hire business - by that I mean they hired old reasonably reliable cars at equally reasonable rates. We used these on excursions down the East coast of Malaysia including to Ipoh, KL and the Cameron Highlands. Our own mode of transport was either our Kichi Bikes or an old Vesper motorcycle. The motorcycle was a classic in the worst sense of the meaning. The clutch cable broke on monotonously frequent occasions and to get home required a running start in second gear and a slow pass for Linda to jump on behind for the equally slow trip home to Hillside.

Pets.

The first pet was a young monkey which Linda took pity on and brought home from the markets. This was during the time the Squadron was operating out of Singapore. The animal took a dislike to me because he figured he ruled the household. He did however provide many amusing moments. His morning routine was to drag a six foot wooden ladder along the side of the house, climb the steel window grate and look down on us in bed from the thin air vents above the

window - there were no fly-screens on these houses; we had daily malaria tablets instead.

His other Houdini trick was to step out of his waist lead and proceed to terrorise the neighbourhood. He would access the neighbours house through the steel grates which covered our adjoining airwells usually followed by a dispassionate cry from the neighbour, 'Edwards, come and get your monkey.' At bread delivery time he was known to head up the street to help himself if the bread was left out. The Gardener took such a liking to this animal that instead of tending the three gardens he was allocated, he would spend half these days feeding the monkey rice cakes. With our first child on the way, something had to be done with the monkey - he had shown his jealousy streak and his canine teeth. The solution was to give him to the Gardiner.

A kitten, rescued from a monsoon drain, became a pet. It had a bent tail, a product of a religious belief that any whole animal would take the place of a humane spirit in heaven. The number of bent tail cats made us think it was becoming part of their genetics to be born that way. At the end of the tour the cat went to the RSPCA for rehousing.

Children.

The first of our two children born in Malaysia was one born at the hospital at Minden Barracks on Penang Island which was run by the British Army. The British were in the process of moving out of SE Asia and was closed by 1971. (The Gynaecologist was said to be fifth in line to the Queen - true or not Her Majesties children were as old as us.)

Our first child, Tina, was premature and spent six weeks in hospital pos-delivery. This was very traumatic for mother and father as we were not allowed to stay in the unit with the baby and transport to Minden was scarce. It was heartbreaking visiting our little baby two or three times a week and having to come home without her. (For many new mothers it was even more of a trauma as often the only family member in Malaysia at the time was the husband - no mothers or other close family members to fall back on.)

Our second child, Karla, was borne at No4 RAAF Hospital, Butterworth on 7 September 1971. The following day, all mums and bubs were transferred to the brand new Maternity Unit. We had to walk our babies in their bassinets from one unit to the other, making Karla the last baby borne in the *temporary unit in Butterworth Hospital after Minden had closed*. (The hospital was on the mainland so for mothers on Penang Island, it meant an Ambulance trip from Penang Island across on the ferry to the mainland, then up the coast to Butterworth.)

Having children was like a past-time for the young families while on this posting. Families had free medical while the member was posted to Butterworth. For the birth of our first child we actually were able to make money from the Health Insurance we had which paid out a fixed amount for a confinement. That loophole was stopped with legislation by the time our second daughter was born up there.

There was an allowance to engage home help - an Armah. Initially we had a young lady who had no experience with babies. When Linda realised this, I was given the unpleasant task of sacking her - it was a very tearful event as these were coveted positions. It did not take long for the word to spread and other potential amahs or their husbands were hanging over the gate. Our second Armah, Seyroa, stayed with us during the rest of our tour. She had her own older children and lived in a Kampong closer in toward town. On occasions she would sleep overnight when we had functions to attend. Sayroa invited us as guests of honour to the wedding for her daughter to a man who was introduced as being a body guard for the Singapore leader at the time.

Both Tina and Karla have had to live their lives explaining why their Birth Certificates were written in Bahasa Malay; and had to obtain a certified English translation to use whenever their Birth Certificate was called for.

The end of the Tour

A popular request of the local volunteer radio station each time the Qantas 707 charter was returning members and their families to

Australia was the song, 'Leaving on a Jet Plane' - so much so it had an embargo on the frequency of its playing.

On reflection we had a great time learning to be a family without outside interference, which has stood the test of time. But we did sadly lose a couple of friends who just could not continue without, it would seem, close family connections.

All in all, a posting to Butterworth gave the young married couple a kick start financially. Three Squadron, Butterworth and Malaysia have left us with lifetime memories.

Or, at least, this is how we remember our time in Malaysia.

Chapter 38

February 1969 - Leaving Australia

From Carol Hall, wife of Jim Hall.

In February 1969 Jim had to go with the Mirages to Butterworth, Malaysia as 3 Sqn was being resettled there, with us wives and children to follow a few days later. That is where I met a lot of the wives for the first time.

Jan Pryor and the boys were the only ones I knew before leaving Newcastle apart from Carol Jones. Carol and I had gone to the same school and our mothers used to play Bingo together. She was due to have her first baby, Kylie, so she did not come up with us and would follow some time later, but she was able to have the dreaded vaccinations. I drove three girls up to the base at Williamtown, one being Carol Jones but I can't remember who else was in the car. I have a story to tell about Carol. When we went up to Williamtown to get our injections for travelling overseas, we were sitting in the car park when a Mirage took off and she said that is a twin seater and I asked her how did she know, that they all look the same to me; she said you can tell by the sound. When I told Jim, he said it sounds like someone is pulling her leg as he couldn't tell the difference.

When we left from Williamtown Air Force Base in a QANTAS aircraft, my whole family was there to see us off. I was so scared as it was my first time on a plane and also the first time leaving Australia for another country. Michael and I had the front seat as they had a baby cradle attached to the wall so baby Michael had somewhere safe to sleep..

Jan Pryor kept coming up to me to make sure I was doing OK, when we

landed in Darwin it was for a few hours stop over Jan came and got me and looked after Michael to give me a break while we sat in the terminal. I was treated very well, no complaints. I did meet a few of the girls like Pam Sutcliffe, she had Leeanne and also Ann Lollback.

It was a long trip to Butterworth and I was so pleased to land and see Jim again. After going through Customs it was so hot, I had never felt heat like this before, they put us on these buses to take us to our new homes which was an experience alone when our bus driver hit a fellow on a bike. He pulled up and told us not to open any windows and keep seated. The people in the street were punching the windows of the bus and yelling at us, it was so scary. The Airforce Police and Malaysian Police arrived and we finally were dropped off at our new homes.

Our house was on Base and we lived with the British Officers and at the back was the Swimming Pool and Tennis Courts and a NAAFI nearby to buy our groceries. To enter the area, we had to go in and out of the main gate so we were very safe and the guards used to walk around to make sure no one came up from the Malacca Straits which was near the pool.

We had a two bedroom house with a Lounge room and Dining room in one and a Kitchen, a Bathroom and Toilet, the laundry and the Amah room. They had steel bars on all the windows and a thick wire steel screen door with a big lock on it. All this was very strange to me.

I did feel safe and we had a British family across from us; some were friendly, others were not so, then at the back were the Officers, mostly doctors and either side of us were Australians, whom I got to meet.

Jim used to play Rugby Union at Butterworth on the weekend and it was the first time I had watched a 'line out' as I'm used to Rugby League. That's when I met up with Pam Sutcliffe and Anne Lollback as we had our children on the rugs to watch our hubbies play footie, it was a good place to make friends and we have been life time friends since.

We were lucky to have Lynn and Casey Corcoran living at Robina Estate; she

took me everywhere as she had a car and we used to go over to Penang Island on the Car Ferry with Janet Skelly. Because Penang was duty free we had to pay duty when we came back to Butterworth, so Lynn's door panels used to lift out so we could hide our gifts that we had bought, then buy fruit and vegetables and fill the boot as we did not have to pay duty on them and that made Customs happy to find something in the car. I'm sure they knew what was going on but played the game.

Lynn started me on tennis at the back of our house near the pool area, we played twice a week, just a friendly game with the Officer's wives and airman's wives When the Officers wives played the other 3 days, we could not play those days as it was not allowed for the Airman's wives to associate with them on their special day.

I had met a girl that I went to Jesmond High School with and it was great to catch up and she would come around after our friendly game to catch up. When her husband found out she was banned from seeing me as the Officer's wives were not allowed to socialise with Airman's wives! It was a silly rule but we had to go along with it, I missed seeing her except on the Tennis Court and we used to have a good laugh as our games were friendly and not serious at all.

Jim had to go back to Australia as his brother Harry had been in a mine accident, the roof fell on top of him and he was crushed while driving a machine. Jim's Mum sent a letter to let him know about the accident so this was a week after the accident, Jim had a tough time trying to explain that he needed to go home to see his brother in case he died.

They did send him home and he saw Harry who was in a bad way, his spine had been damaged and he had no use of his legs and unfortunately that was permanent. Jim stayed for a week then came back to Butterworth and then when he got home he had to go down to Singapore for a month as all the planes had been sent down there because they had to repair the runway at Butterworth.

So Michael and I were left alone for a long time and in this time we had riots

in Malaysia. It was good living on base as we had the Gurkha Solders patrolling the area and down on the beach front.

This is around the time I met Lois and Mal Jamieson as they were newlyweds who had arrived from Australia on a RAAF Transport plane at night time and didn't have any accommodation. They knocked on the door asking if they could sleep the night. This was the only address Mal had of his boss (Jim) but like a good wife I couldn't let them go so I offered my bed and I slept with Michael as he was in a cot and there was a single bed in his room. To this day Lois cannot believe I would let strangers into my home as I did not know either of them before this. I'm so trusting; we have been great friends ever since then.

May 1969

On the day the riots started I was over at Penang with my next door neighbour and as we were walking back to the Ferry we noticed all the shops were closing and people were heading up to Penang Road, we thought it must have been one of the holidays and took no notice until we got to the Ferry and they said "where have you both been as there are riots up in Penang Road." They said no one is allowed to come over from Butterworth and we are taking people back to Butterworth and to make sure you go straight back to the base, by taxi from the wharf.

We were told to go down to the NAAFI to stock up on food as you will not be allowed to leave your home until everything is safe, and it was going to be a long time before the riots are over. It was months before everything returned to normal.

My Amah, Misha, went home when she could as she had a family of her own, we had to stay inside and we could not even go to the pool. We could go to the movies on Base, and if you wanted to go you had to leave your front porch light on and the bus driver would honk his horn and the Service Police would walk down with guns and take you to the bus and back again. I remember going to see the movie Jungle Book, Michael was too young to come with me so he stayed home with Misha, at this time Jim was still down

in Singapore as the runway had not been fixed.

Later on the Curfew got shorter and we could leave the house for 1 to 2 hours If not inside by that time you would have to stay at your friend's house if that is where you were.

Soon it was most of the day but night time it was on again, we use to go up to see Lynn and Casey, they had a car and would pick us up and then drive us home again. After a few months it got better and we could stay out most of the day and night. If you were at a party and the Curfew had started, that's where you stayed. The fellows were so upset because they could not go home so they had to stay and drink some more until dawn.

When Jim got back from Singapore he walked inside the house and I said something is different with you but I could not put a finger on what was different as it was so long since I had seen him. Finally when I kissed him I noticed his hairy lip, apparently they had a bet who could grow the longest and best Moustache; Jim did not win. Jim's was thick but you could not see it as it was white because he had very blonde hair, so I had to take a photo of him pointing to his top lip so to prove he had a moustache.

It was great to have him home, as Michael and I had been alone without him for a few months with him having to go back to Australia and when he came back after two days back down to Singapore, it was wonderful to have him home with us.

I had not met Jan Moore as Ken worked with Jim and they became good

mates so we invited them over for the weekend as they lived over at Penang so they drove over at lunch time and the fellows wanted to go down to the Sergeant's Mess for a few drinks while Jan and I went to the Hair Dressers to get our hair done because they were going to take us out for a nice meal and it gave Jan and myself time to get to know one another.

We waited half the night and no fellows until a Taxi pulled up and these two very unbalanced fellows got out of the Taxi without falling to the ground. We were watching from the porch with the light off and they could not see us but we could see and hear them staggering through the rose bushes on either side of the foot path and they are shushing each other not to make too much noise.

It was a sight to see these two grown up men act like little kids.
They had a good story for us saying they had been fighting the fire at the Bar at the Club which is a good story and they told us how they saved everyone from harm, so that is the reason they could not get home to take us out for dinner. They said they needed another drink, Jan got Ken his beer and he missed his mouth completely, pouring the beer over his shoulder, then went to sleep, Jim wasn't as bad but he was very drunk too. Jan and I had a good time in just watching them make fun of themselves. We still talk about that night.

On the 16th July 1969 we finally shifted over to Penang Island to 21 Jalan Bunga Orchard at Hillside. I remember the date clearly as it was my birthday. A few days later after shifting I realised that I had left some money hidden in the Butterworth House, so Jim got in contact with the new owners and they said they did not find any money so Jim said could I come in and look where my wife hid it, everyone was surprised that the money was still hidden in an envelope taped under the drawer. It was a great place to hide money. I don't think I would try it these days. About the same time we watched the landing on the Moon on the TV of our new next door neighbours, it was something we could not miss seeing.

It was a two story house, three bedrooms upstairs with a bathroom and toilet downstairs, the lounge room, dining room with a sink on the side, kitchen,

Ahma's room and a spare room leading off to the laundry and a toilet.

All the cement floors where painted red and there were bars on the windows and a steel screen on the front and back doors, something I was now comfortable with and felt more secure. It was so different to back home.in Newcastle.

Across the road lived Maxine & Gus Winen, Jim knew Gus and I did see them one night in Newcastle when our car broke down under a street light near Dangar Park at Mayfield, as they were walking along Maitland Road with Dick and Carol Jones. They said what were we doing just parked on the main road and we told them the car had a broken fan belt but they didn't bother to come and help us, they just walked off laughing. Isn't it nice to have good friend to help when you need it?

We became very close friends to Gus and Maxine and Gus used to play the song Turkey Buzzard very loudly (theme song from a picture, maybe called McKennar's Gold), it was his favourite record. Jim used to yell at him from our bedroom window to turn it up a bit more! When he had parties over at his place the fellows used to spend most of the time at the back fence. The fence had a big bend in it, from all the fellows leaning on it because it overlooked a house below, giving a fine view of the main bedroom and the occupants.

Another time when I was pregnant with Teresa, I had to go down to the Medical Hostel for a check-up as I was 8 month pregnant and Jim didn't want me to drive so Maxine said she would drive me down in our car with Paul and Michael in the back. That was an experience by itself, because when Maxine backed out of our hilly drive-way the brakes failed. She did a great job saving us but silly us decided to continue (without brakes) to the local garage to see if we could get it fixed but we forgot we had to go down a hill onto a T intersection so silly us did that, we had to turn left and go down another large hill as we could not turn right because of the traffic. Then we turned around at the bottom of the hill and came up to where the garage was on the top of the hill. Lucky we are still alive and to this day I congratulate Maxine for her driving skills.

Teresa was born in March 1970 at the British Far East Hospital at Minden Barracks on Penang Island (now a university). This photo is of me holding my new daughter in the centre courtyard of the hospital before going home. The night Teresa was born, we had gone out for a nice dinner and a very bad bottle of Spanish wine and drove home. Teresa then decided it was time to arrive, so we drove over to the hospital in our old Ford Consul, strangely enough, painted the same colour as the RAAF cars. Shortly after arriving, I went into labour. Jim was invited to be at the birth, which he declined, and stayed in the room to have a cigarette. Halfway through the cigarette, the nurse came back and all Jim could hear was "do you want a daughter?" He said a boy or girl would be fine, so she said "no dummy…you HAVE a daughter!" Teresa was born so fast and hasn't stopped since.

Michael love watching his Dad play Soft Ball, my friends couldn't believe how Michael used to just sit quietly on the rug and not run around, I trained him well. Some days the field would be all mud for them to play in and when Jim got home we had to take him into the laundry to hose him down, before he could go upstairs for a shower. This is a picture of Michael hosing his Dad off after a game.

It was great living over on the Island as we could buy all our duty free like stereos, radios, and records. Our first record was

Sergio Mendes & Brazil 66 - Look Around, we still have this record and it still brings back some very good memories. Most of my clothes were tailored made, and we got them to make undies out of the same material, as our dresses were very short. This was a great help as they blended in with the dress so showing any underwear wasn't so obvious. A big help for us Mums.

We had a fruit and vegie cart pull up at the front gate to sell me their fresh produce, the children loved seeing him as it was so fresh and he was so friendly.

We had a good life over on the Island as there was so much to do with sports and social events and made a lot of friends and we spent a lot of time down at the beach. The social life was great as we had an Armah to look after the children when we went out drinking and dancing the night away, I played

Softball and Stretch - Horrie Robinson was our coach. Jim played Softball at the weekends and Volley Ball (The Dero's) on week nights at the Hostel. He gave away Rugby Union because he couldn't get to training enough and started to get hurt too much. The team was called The Saints and the blokes loved the game and there were more injuries than in Rugby Union, especially ankles which were damaged after sliding into Home Base. The other bases used to slide, but Home Base was fixed.

I could write so much more on the nearly three years we spent in Malaysia, we both enjoyed it so much to the point of Jim asking for an extension to the posting. We could have stayed there forever. He was told three years was the limit and to go back to Australia. We were lucky enough to later spend 1978-80 living at Changi in Singapore when Jim was attached to the Singapore Air Force.

We moved back to Australia in January 1972 to Richmond. Jim was after a Flight Engineers job and thought being at Richmond would enhance his chances, which proved correct and he spent the rest of his time in the RAAF doing just that. The time in Malaysia was a very eventful and enjoyable few years in our lives. Moving overseas and then being apart during the very early days was challenging, but good also. Many lifelong friends were made and we are still in contact with many of them. Funnily enough, our home in Queensland is in a Brisbane suburb which gets its name from a town in Malaysia (and Thailand), reminding us of those fantastic three years so long ago. I understand Tanah Merah means Red Earth (which we have).

Chapter 39

Guess Who

Brian Moore

I was doing an after flight inspection on an aircraft, which was the last a/c to return from a night flying exercise, when I came to the starboard super sonic tank I was most surprised to find a pair of wheel chocks hanging over it. They had not caused any major damage that I could see, other than a few marks on the under side of the mainplane, and minor damage to the fairing where the connecting rope had pulled back to point where we would have to drop the tank to release them. As most of the crew had already had gone home it was decided to leave any repairs to be carried out in daylight hours. It appears that the wheel chocks were present on the tanks for the duration of the night exercise.

Startling Incident

We were on a deployment to Darwin when one of the aircraft had been parked with one of the speed brakes (port) still extended. I think Berl Bell was either refuelling or doing an A/F and he jumped on the brake to close it. This caused enough back pressure to break the claw lock in the longitudinal undercarriage jack which holds the main undercarriage down and locked. Unlocked, the jack compresses and the MLG moves forward, causing the aircraft to 'waddle' backwards and settle on its tail, nose in the air. As luck would have it someone was replacing the brake chute canister and the aircraft came to rest on the stand used to do this. I don't remember what happened after that, but I will never forget the startled look on Berl's face as the Miracle reared up.

Chapter 40

Business Opportunities

Jim Hall

After the recovery of A3-52 had been completed and the recovery team had returned to base, I observed one SNCO (who shall remain nameless) who had been involved in the recovery team, place a rescued, very twisted brake disc in his locker. As we were all highly paid, I suspected that this 60 odd pounds of copper would find its way to the local scrap metal dealers and be exchanged for Currency of the Realm, so supplementing his income.

As any good Framie would do, I waited until he left the change room and transferred the disc from his locker to my locker. Come knock off time, a very agitated FSGT started yelling "who was the bloody thief who took the brake disc?" No sense of humour or sense of irony. He was nearly to the point of having a heart attack, shouting that NO ONE was going home until the thief returned his property when I 'found it' and returned it to him, so having another good memory of my time with 3 Squadron. RIP Wal.

A Bad PP207 (Annual Efficiency Report) Coming Up

Jim Hall

At Butterworth in around 1970, two Warrant Officers enjoyed a very casual existence running the 3 Squadron 'C' Servicing hangar, out of the hustle and bustle of the Flight Line where life was a little more frantic and busy. Every day at the same time, they left their office and

proceeded to the Sergeant's Mess, firstly to play snooker and then have a leisurely meal. Watches could be set with great accuracy, noting their departure time.

At the time of this incident, the hangar was full of drop tanks being serviced by a couple of dedicated, highly skilled Framies who shall remain unnamed, to protect all who were involved . Anyway, as the time approached for the scheduled departure, one enterprising lad (the shorter, more nimble one) kept low (below the windows of the office) and locked the door from the outside and then retreated to his drop tank, some distance from the office. The boys watched as the two WOFF's struggled with the door, becoming more and more agitated as the clock ticked away, maybe envisioning their time on the snooker table being taken by some usurper . Yelling and banging on the wall was observed until the perpetrator ran over to let them out saying "it must have been xxx, who locked you in" and then apologised profusely for the conduct of his offsider.

Red faced from their exertion and under pressure to get to the Mess quickly, the WO's pedalled off down the road. Revenge was probably on their minds.

I think this story is a fair report of events, but Dick Jones and Mal Jamieson would know the full details.

Chapter 41

A Couple of Memories
Jim Hall

I joined 3 Squadron in 1967 after having been working on Mirages since 1964 at OCU, back when we had one aircraft and French advisers (and blueprints of hydraulic systems, all in French). We had one aircraft which we pushed out by manpower in the morning and back in at night in case it got wet….no Clarktor. Anyway, back to 3 Squadron and Butterworth. There are many memories, all good and a bunch of great blokes to work with. Indonesian Navy (from memory), presented two banners to us at Djuanda which were promptly forgotten and would have been left on the tarmac when we departed but for an enterprising Framie who took them into safekeeping. They were not missed for about a year by Headquarters and one was eventually found and returned to be held in perpetuity. I wonder if it is still around? The other is still missing.

One good memory was an incident featuring a really great bloke…… one PLTOFF Phil Astley. Phil, from what I understand, was one of the top guns in the squadron (among many, I am sure) and also a top Shortstop in our Softball team. One game I recall was when we were fielding and the bases were loaded, the batter hit a ball straight to Phil, who threw it to first base to get the batter out….or so we thought….I still swear I saw him throw it (we all did) but Phil still had it in his hot little hand, tagged the runner going from 2nd to 3rd base (he saw Phil throw it too) and THEN threw it to 1st base, so getting two out for the

price of one. Nice.

Phil was a larrikin and I recall when the CO Ted Radford was making a speech one afternoon in the hangar where we were having a few cleansing ales, Phil turned to our group and said in a fairly loud voice "who wants another one?" as he noisily rattled around in the big bin full of ice.. Ted then said "let me know when you are finished Mr Astley".....Phil said "OK Sir", got our beers and signalled Ted to proceed.

The story I started to tell was one day we got a message from Tengah where one ginger headed driver had done a nice high speed run over the strip before departing for Butterworth, unfortunately, he got a little excited, over sped the landing gear and ripped off both outer fairing doors from the Main Landing Gear which then fluttered down to earth. I was volunteered to go down in the Dual to assess the damage and see what could be done. Phil was the pilot and so we proceeded with a few tools. The fairing doors had done little damage to the wing so I removed what remained and then Blue flew the aircraft back to Butterworth with gear down. We followed and after take-off, Phil said he has dropped his maps and did I mind flying it while he found them. Of course I said "what a top idea" and so I flew it back all the way to Butterworth, including doing rolls (so fast!) and going supersonic. A very memorable trip. Unfortunately, further down the track, Phil lost his pilot's medical due to some ear problem, came off Fighters and went onto Caribous. He used to do a very impressive air display at the Open Days for a long time. I understand he has now passed on but I am pleased to have met him.

I was posted out of Butterworth in January of 1972 having just one regret. Just before departure from Williamtown in 1969, an aircraft broke away from the towbar and was stopped by the left drop tank

hitting the brick annex on the hangar. The nose of the tank was crushed and it looked like going off to Board of Survey but I was able to have it boxed up and sent to Butterworth with the rest of the tanks. It was a 286 gallon tank which would also fit in the centreline position so I figured with a bit of modification, doors fitted to the side and a floor inside, it would make a good pannier for carrying spares around to our broken down aircraft instead of being strapped to the back ejection seat. This seat could then be occupied by a technician to carry out repairs if needed. It could still be jettisoned like a normal tank if required. Permission didn't come to modify the tank until very late in 1971, just in time before I returned to Australia. Our Sheet Metal Worker did a great job (see photos) but I can't remember his name after all these years. Sorry mate. Regardless, I had a top five years with THE Premier Fighter Squadron of the RAAF. Thanks gents.

Chapter 42

Reminiscencing

Brendan O'Loghlin

I remember being quite awed by launching forth out of Australia in this way, but enjoyed the experience immensely.

A twist of fate was that nearly twenty years later, after closing down the permanent presence at Butterworth as the last OC in 1988, I flew one of the Mirages back to Oz at the end of their service. We were withdrawing the last remaining half squadron, by then a resurrected 79 SQN, not 3. Regrettably, it was not the same airframe, A3-86 (seen arriving in the lines in the movie), that I flew up in '69. She had already been retired. When we finally got the last of the Mohicans to Woomera, I found A3-86 there in a hangar, all cocooned for disposal (I have a pic of her at rest in my log-book).

In the intervening years between those two periods at Butterworth, I was posted away from Mirages for 15 years, flying choppers for four years but mainly behind a desk or three. How strange to find myself back in the bang seat all that time later and retracing steps. That later redeployment went via Singapore. We visited Tengah where we had all deployed for months in 1969 as Teh Chooi Nai made another fortune from resurfacing the runway at BUT. By 1988, Tengah was by then normally closed to foreigners but we were given a special welcome. At the next stop for fuel at Den Pasar, Bali, I sat under the wing remembering the 1969 staging stop just across the water at Djuanda in Java (yes, and the leaking fuel) on the way North.

I thought I had my route map of the 1969 trip, but can't find it.

Chapter 43

3 SQUADRON
LIST OF OFFICERS AND NCOs DEPLOYED TO MALAYA VIA OPERATION THOROUGHFARE

Officers
WG CDR E.A. RADFORD
SQN LDR R.V. JOHNSTON
SQN LDR R.J. WALSH
FLT LT D.W. OWENS
FLT LT R.R. RODDY
FLT LT B.D. SEARLE
FLD OFF D. BOWDEN
FLG OFF J.F. DeRUYTER
FLG OFF G.J. ENNIS
FLG OFF F.R.FRY
FLG OFF J.W. GILDERSLEEVE
FLG OFF P.J. HARRISON
FLG OFF A. MUFORD
FLG OFF B. O'LOGHLIN
FLG OFF D. PENNA
FLG OFF B. ROBERTS
FLG OFF B.M. SHULZ
FLG OFF J.A. SMITH
FLG OFF K.C. SULLIVAN
FLG OFF R. SUSANS
FLG OFF R.A. WILSON

SNCO's
W OFF M.H. CLARK
W OFF A.A. CROSS
W OFF K.B. PARKER
F SGT C.T. BADRICK
F SGT R. HARVEY
F SGT R.H. PERKINS
F SGT E. PLANT
SGT J. ADENBROOKE
SGT B.S. CHAMBELL
SGT W.J. FARRELL
SGT F. HOWELL
SGT R.B. JAGO
SGT D.K. KING
SGT B.M. LEIGHTON
SGT K. MOORE
SGT J.A. MURRAY
SGT P. NEWARK
SGT E. O'HARA
SGT R. RICHARDS
SGT C. SAXTON
SGT K.W. SMITH
SGT G.W. THOMPSON
SGT A.L. WATTERS
SGT R. YOUNG

NCO's
CPL D.G. BARBER
CPL J. BEAUMONT
CPL E.D. BLAGG
CPL A.N. BROOKS
CPL T.F. BROPHT
CPL N. BROWN
CPL P. CHAPELOW
CPL G.E. EALES
CPL J.R. GRIFFEN
CPL B.W. GUY
CPL T.R. HILL
CPL M.L. HOLLAND
CPL D.C. HOLT
CPL R.D. JONES
CPL R.R. JONES
CPL R.J. LARSEN
CPL F.P. LITTLE
CPL R. MATTERS
CPL G.D. MORRISON
CPL A. PAGE
CPL A.G. PARKER
CPL L. RUSSELL
CPL K. SANDERSON
CPL I. SHEUTZE
CPL R.J. STEWART
CPL R. J. TAYLOR
CPL B. WAGENFELLER
CPL P. R. WALKER
CPL B. WHETTER
CPL C. WHITE

Chapter 44

AIRMEN

LAC W.A. ANDREWS
LAC F.W. ARGAET
LAC P.R. BAKER
LAC C.J. BALDOCK
LAC G.C. BALLARD
LAC W.P. BEATTIE
LAC R.I. BELL
LAC M. BENNETT
LAC H.J. BOGGS
LAC D BONEHAM
LAC B.W. BRADLEY
LAC R.S. BRAUNHOLZ
LAC D.G. DALTON
LAC W.C. DAVIES
LAC T.H. DEATHRIDGE
LAC B.W. DIBLEY
LAC R.J. DIETZ
LAC K.J. DINHAM
LAC S. P. DOBSON
LAC R. DOYLE
LAC K.J. DUNWOODIE
LAC D. ECCLES
LAC S.V.L. EDWARDS
LAC R. ESPENZID
LAC L. GALE
LAC T.R. GARRETT
AC G.M. ARCHER
AC J.M. BUCHANAN
AC D.J. BURGESS
AC A.W. FARR
AC T.R. GRAHAM
AC B. McCLELLAND
AC G.J. MEINS
AC G.J. RENNIE

LAC D.J. GORDON
LAC G.T. HANSBURY
LAC G.F. HARRISON
L.A. HARRISON
R.D. HART
C.W. HARVEY
G. HEILIGMAN
LAC P.R. HILL
LAC O.W. HORNE
LAC H.A. HOWARD
LAC J.B. HUDSEN
LAC M. HUGALL
LAC J.A. HUNTER
LAC D.K. IKEN
LAC B.A. INGLIS
LAC J. JACSKON
LAC P.L. JACOBSON
LAC B.S. JAMES
LAC M.S. JAMIESON
LAC R.D. JONES
LAC J. KANE
LAC P.A. KELLY
LAC K.P. KLINGBERG
LAC J.A. LANHAM
LAC J.W. LATTER
LAC M.T. LAWS

LAC M. LOLLBACK
LAC B. LOVETT
LAC R.J. MAHER
LAC P.J. MAK
LAC G. MERIDITH
LAC D.F. MESSER
LAC D.A. MILLAR
LAC J. MITCHELL
LAC B.C. MOORE
LAC N.J. MORIARTY
LAC G.A. NEWBURY
LAC L.G. NINESS
LAC A NORDHUIS
LAC H.A. NOTTING
LAC K.J O'BYRNE
LAC S.J. O'REILLY
LAC R.T. PALMER
LAC C.R. PARKINSON
LAC R.W. PERRIN
LAC R.S. PETERSON
LAC R.J. PORTER
LAC R.W. PRYOR
LAC R.J. RAMADGE
LAC R. REEDER
LAC D. ROBINSON
LAC P.N. ROSS

LAC A.D. ROTHERBY
LAC P.J SANDERS
LAC T.J. SHEAHAN
LAC G. SIMPSON
LAC B.F. SMITH
LAC R.C. SMITH
LAC M. SPARKES
LAC R SPEELMYER
LAC G.F. SPRIGGINS
LAC W. STEKIS
LAC N.T. STREATER
LAC W.J.STRONG
LAC N.F. SULLIVAN
LAC B.C. SUMMERS
LAC G.L. SUTCLIFFE
LAC T.C. TALTY
LAC K. TAYLOR
LAC S.E. TURNER
LAC D.R. UNICOMB
LAC R.A. VLADICH
LAC P.D. VOGELZANG
LAC R.J. WALDIE
LAC C.J. WATSON
LAC K WATSON
LAC G.L. WHEBELL
LAC N.E. WHETTER
LAC A. WILLIAMS
LAC P. WITTS
LAC R. ZOMER

Chapter 45

THE No.3 FIGHTER SQUADRON SONG

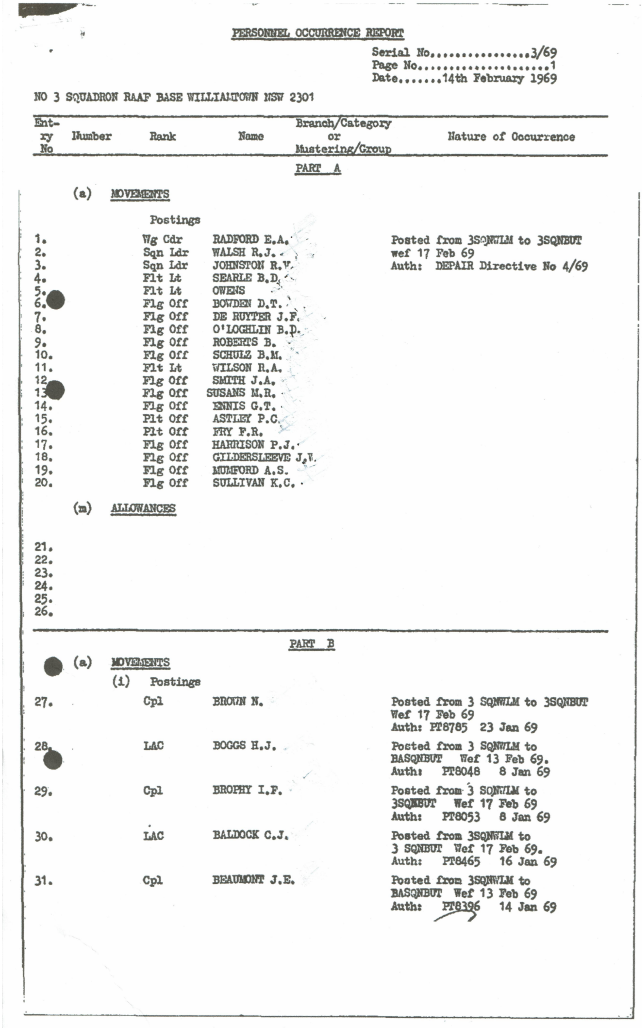
Song to the tune of "Yellow Submarine" by The Beatles

Words: composed by Rod Vladich (inspired by Ted Radford)

V.1	At the place	we called the base
	Was an aeroplane	we worked and flew
	And we loved	to be a part
	Of the knuckleheads	and workin' crew
V.2	So we flew	up through the clouds
	Till we found	the sky of blue
	And we lived	to have the fun
	Of flying aeroplanes	and drinkin' brew
CHORUS	*We all (flew in or serviced)*	*the camouflaged mirage*
	The camouflaged mirage	*the camouflaged mirage*
	We all (flew in or serviced)	*the camouflaged mirage*
	The camouflaged mirage	*the camouflaged mirage*
V.3	Then we flew	to overseas
	Flying sorties	no holding back
	We were known as	the MIGHTY LIZARDS
	The squadron called upon	for ground attack
CHORUS	*We all (flew in or serviced)*	*the camouflaged mirage*
	The camouflaged mirage	*the camouflaged mirage*
	We all (flew in or serviced)	*the camouflaged mirage*
	The camouflaged mirage	*the camouflaged mirage*
V.4	Now we live	a life of ease
	Some of us are gone	but we believe
	Those best years	have been and gone
	When we were brothers of	3 squad-d-dron
CHORUS	*We all (flew in or serviced)*	*the camouflaged mirage*
	The camouflaged mirage	*the camouflaged mirage*
	We all (flew in or serviced)	*the camouflaged mirage*
	The camouflaged mirage	*the camouflaged mirage*

Chapter 46

Personnel Occurrence Reports



PERSONNEL OCCURRENCE REPORT

Serial No.....3/69
Page No.....1
Date.....14th February 1969

NO 3 SQUADRON RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN NSW 2301

Entry No	Number	Rank	Name	Branch/Category or Mustering/Group	Nature of Occurrence
			PART A		
	(a)	MOVEMENTS			
		Postings			
1.		Wg Cdr	RADFORD E.A.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT
2.		Sqn Ldr	WALSH R.J.		wef 17 Feb 69
3.		Sqn Ldr	JOHNSTON R.V.		Auth: DEPAIR Directive No 4/69
4.		Flt Lt	SEARLE B.D.		
5.		Flt Lt	OWENS		
6.		Flg Off	BOWDEN D.T.		
7.		Flg Off	DE RUYTER J.F.		
8.		Flg Off	O'LOGHLIN B.D.		
9.		Flg Off	ROBERTS B.		
10.		Flg Off	SCHULZ B.M.		
11.		Flt Lt	WILSON R.A.		
12.		Flg Off	SMITH J.A.		
13.		Flg Off	SUSANS M.R.		
14.		Flg Off	ENNIS G.T.		
15.		Flt Off	ASTLEY P.C.		
16.		Flt Off	FRY P.R.		
17.		Flg Off	HARRISON P.J.		
18.		Flg Off	GILDERSLEEVE J.V.		
19.		Flg Off	MUMFORD A.S.		
20.		Flg Off	SULLIVAN K.C.		
	(m)	ALLOWANCES			
21.					
22.					
23.					
24.					
25.					
26.					
			PART B		
	(a)	MOVEMENTS			
		(i) Postings			
27.		Cpl	BROWN N.		Posted from 3 SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT Wef 17 Feb 69 Auth: PT6785 23 Jan 69
28.		LAC	BOGGS H.J.		Posted from 3 SQNWLM to BASQNBUT Wef 13 Feb 69. Auth: PT6048 8 Jan 69
29.		Cpl	BROPHY I.F.		Posted from 3 SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT Wef 17 Feb 69 Auth: PT6053 8 Jan 69
30.		LAC	BALDOCK C.J.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3 SQNBUT Wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT6465 16 Jan 69
31.		Cpl	BEAUMONT J.E.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to BASQNBUT Wef 13 Feb 69 Auth: PT6396 14 Jan 69

PERSONNEL OCCURRENCE REPORT

Serial No.....3/69
Page No.....2

NO 3 SQUADRON RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN NSW

Entry No	Number	Rank	Name	Branch/Category or Mustering/Group	Nature of Occurrence
32.		AC	BUCHANAN J.W.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to
33		Sgt	HOWELL F.J.		3SQNEUT wef 17 Feb 69.
34		LAC	BENNETT ..		Auth: PT8194 10 Jan 69
35		LAC	IKIN D.K.		
36		AC	RENNIE G.J.		
37		Sgt	HALL J.M.		
38		Sgt	MOORE K.J.		
39		LAC	DALTON D.G.		
40		LAC	MOORE B.C.		
41		LAC	JAMIESON M.S.		
42		LAC	BELL R.I.		
43		LAC	NOTTING H.K.		
44		LAC	PRYOR R.W.		
45		LAC	BEATTIE W.P.		
46		AC	MILLAR D.A.		
47		Sgt	SMITH K.W.		
48		Cpl	PARKER A.G.		
49		Cpl	GUY D.W.		
50		AC	SHEAHAN T.J.		
51		AC	DIETZ R.J.		
52		LAC	DOYLE R.W.		
53		LAC	MITCHELL J.		
54		LAC	JONES R.D.		
55		AC	EDWARDS S.V.		
56		AC	NINNESS L.G.		
57		LAC	GORDON D.J.		
58		W Off	PARKER K.B.		
59		Cpl	MORRISON G.		
60		LAC	ARGAET F.W.		
61		LAC	DEATHRIDGE T.H.		
62		LAC	ARCHER G.M.		
63		LAC	WHEBELL G.L.		
64		LAC	HEILIGMAN G.R.		
65		LAC	BRAUNHOLZ R.S.		
66		LAC	ROSS P.N.		
67		LAC	SMITH R.C.		
68		LAC	HARRISON G.F.		
69		LAC	ANDREWS N.A.		
70		LAC	STREATER N.T.		
71		F Sgt	CAMPBELL R.J.		
72		Sgt	ADDENBROOKE J.V.		
73		Cpl	HILL T.R.		
74		Cpl	WHEATER B.H.		
75		LAC	BRADLEY B.W.		
76		LAC	SUMMERS B.C.		
77		LAC	FLANAGAN B.T.		
78		LAC	BONEHAM D.N.		
79		AC	ECCLES D.A.		
80		AC	DAVIES W.C.		
81		LAC	WATSON K.E.		
82		LAC	PETERSON R.J.		
83		F Sgt	HARVEY R.G.		
84		Cpl	PAGE A.		
85		Cpl	BARBER D.G.		

PERSONNEL OCCURRENCE REPORT

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Page No.....3

NO 3 SQUADRON RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN NSW

Entry No	Number	Rank	Name	Branch/Category or Mustering/Group	Nature of Occurrence
86		AC	ZOMER R.		
87		LAC	DINHAM K.J.		
88		AC	REEDER R.F.		
89		LAC	HORNE D.W.		
90		LAC	HOWARD H.A.		
91		LAC	HUGALL M.J.		
92		AC	LOVETT B.L.		
93		LAC	TAYLOR K.G.		
[illegible]		LAC	RAMADGE R.J.		
95		F Sgt	PLANT E.		
96		Sgt	KING D.K.		
97		Cpl	CHAPPELOW O.P.		
98		Cpl	MATTERS R.L.		
99		LAC	STECKIS V.V.		
100					
[illegible]		LAC	GALE L.B.		
102		LAC	SPEELMEYER A.M.		
103		LAC	WITTS P.J.		
104		LAC	BENNETT R.J.		
105		AC	LAWS M.T.		
106		Cpl	HOLT B.C.		
107		W Off	CLARK M.H.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to BASQNBUT wef 15 Jan 69. Auth: PT8021 15 Jan 69
108		W Off	CROSS A.A.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to BASQNBUT wef 13 Feb 69. Auth: PT8056 8 Jan 69
109		Sgt	FARRELL W.J.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8454 16 Jan 69
110		AC	GRAHAM T.G.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 13 Feb 69. Auth: PT8047 8 Jan 69
111		LAC	HART R.D.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8464 16 Jan 69
112		Cpl	HOLLAND M.L.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to BASQNBUT wef 13 Feb 69. Auth: PT8046 8 Jan 69
113		LAC	INGLIS B.A.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to [illegible]BUT wef 13 Feb 69. Auth: PT8054 8 Jan 69
114		LAC	HUNTER J.A.		Posted from 481MNTSQN to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8468 16 Jan 69
115		LAC	JACKSON J.O.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8462 16 Jan 69

PERSONNEL OCCURRENCE REPORT

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NO 3 SQUADRON RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN NSW

Entry No	Number	Rank	Name	Branch/Category or Mustering/Group	Nature of Occurrence
115		AC	JAMES B.S.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8605 21 Jan 69
116		Cpl	JONES R.V.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8198 10 Jan69
117		Cpl	JONES P.R.		
118		F Sgt	PERKINS R.H.		
119		Sgt	SAXTON C.		
120		LAC	O'REILLY S.J.		
121		Sgt	LEIGHTON B.M.		
122		Cpl	SCHUEPZE I.R.		
123		LAC	SPARKES M.L.		
124		LAC	STRONG W.J.		
125		AC	SULLIVAN N.F.		
126		LAC	SIMPSON G.M.		
127		Cpl	LARSEN R.J.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to BASQNBUT wef 13 Feb 69. Auth: PT8051 8 Jan 69
128		Cpl	LITTLE F.P.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUY wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8552 20 Jan 69
129		LAC	LOLLBACK M.A.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8459 16 Jan 69
130		LAC	MEREDITH G.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to BASQNBUT wef 13 Feb 69. Auth: PT8055 8 Jan 69
131		LAC	MORIARTY N.J.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8786 23 Jan 69
132		Sgt	O'HARA E.G.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8460 16 Jan 69
133		LAC	PORTER R.J.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8398 14 Jan 69
134		Sgt	RICHARDS R.K.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8467 16 Jan 69

PERSONNEL OCCURRENCE REPORT

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NO 3 SQUADRON RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN NSW

Entry No	Number	Rank	Name	Branch/Category or Mustering/Group	Nature of Occurrence
135		Cpl	RUSSELL L.A.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT6375 14 Jan 69
136		LAC	DUNWOODIE K.J.		
137		W Off	CLARK M.H.		
138		Cpl	WAGENFELLER B.		
139		AC	WILLIAMS A.		
140		AC	PERRIN R.W.		
141		LAC	WALDIE R.J.		
142		Sgt	NEWARK P.J.		
143		LAC	BALLARD G.C.		
144		Cpl	BROOKS A.M.		
145		LAC	ESPENZID R.		
146		LAC	JACOBSOHN P.L.		
147		AC	NOORDHUIS A.		
148		AC	MAK P.J.		
149		LAC	SMITH B.F.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to BASQNBUT wef 13 Feb 69. Auth: PT6052 8 Jan 69
150		LAC	SPRIGGINS G.F.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT6463 16 Jan 69
151		LAC	SUTCLIFFE G.L.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT6456 16 Jan 69
152		LAC	SECOLD N.B.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 478WNTSQN wef 16 Jan 69. Auth: PT5974 2 Dec 69
153		Sgt	THOMPSON G.W.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 478WNTSQN wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT6401 14 Jan 69
154		LAC	VLADICH R.A.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 478WNTSQN wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT6466 16 Jan 69
155		LAC	VOGELZANG P.D.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT6455 16 Jan 69
156		Cpl	WALKER P.R.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to BASQNBUT wef 13 Feb 69. Auth: PT6053 8 Jan 69
157		Sgt	WATTERS A.L.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT6395 14 Jan 69
158		LAC	WHETTER N.E.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT6457 16 Jan 69

PERSONNEL OCCURRENCE REPORT

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NO 3 SQUADRON RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN NSW

Entry No	Number	Rank	Name	Branch/Catogory or Mustering/Group	Nature of Occurrence
159			YOUNG R.F.		Posted from 3SQNWLM to BASQNBUT wef 15 Jan 69. Auth: PT8020 8 Jan 69
160			BURGESS B.J.		Posted from 481MNTSQN to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8608 21 Jan 69
[redacted]			CLARK M.H.		Posted from BASQNBUT to 3SQNBUT wef 12 Feb 69. Auth: PT8900 24 Jan 69
162			DWYER B.J.		Posted from 75SQN to 3SQNBUT wef 12 Feb 69. Auth: PT8892 24 Jan 69
163			DOBSON S.F.		Posted from 481MNTSQN to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8378 14 Jan 69
164			EALES G.E.		Posted from 481MNTSQN to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8553 20 Jan 69
165			FARR A.W.		Posted from 481MNTSQN to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8399 14 Jan 69
166			HAYMAN L.F.		Posted from 77SQN to 3SQNBUT wef 12 Feb 69. Auth: PT8838 23 Jan 69
167			HERRING D.A.		Posted from 77SQN to 3SQNBUT wef 24 Feb 69. Auth: PT8672 21 Jan 69
[redacted]			HUDSON J.B.		Posted from 76SQN to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8379 14 Jan 69
169			JACOBS R.J.		Posted from 77SQN to 3SQNBUT wef 28 Feb 69. Auth: PT8839 23 Jan 69
[redacted]			KABLE R.R.		Posted from 75SQN to 3SQNBUT wef 12 Feb 69. Auth: PT8891 24 Jan 69
171			KLINGBERG K.P.		Posted from 76SQN to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8760 23 Jan 69
172			KANE J.E.		Posted from 481MNTSQN to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8457 16 Jan 69

PERSONNEL OCCURRENCE REPORT

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NO 3 SQUADRON RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN

Entry No	Number	Rank	Name	Branch/Category or Mustering/Group	Nature of Occurrence
173			LAYTON J.A.		Posted from 75SQN to 3SQNBUT wef 12 Feb 69. Auth: PT8896 24 Jan 69
174			LYNCH W.		Posted from 76SQN to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT6784 23 Jan 69
175			MEREDITH G.		Posted from BASQNBUT to 3SQNBUT wef 12 Feb 69. Auth: PT8899 24 Jan 69
176			INGLIS B.A.		Posted from BASQNBUT to 3SQNBUT wef 12 Feb 69. Auth: PT8898 24 Jan 69
177			MARRIOTT D.		Posted from 77SQN to 3SQNBUT wef 24 Feb 69. Auth: PT8671 21 Jan 69
178			O'BYRNE K.J.		Posted from 76SQN to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8376 14 Jan 69
179			PARKINSON C.R.		Posted from 2FOCU to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8196 10 Jan 69
180			HILL P.R.		
181			LANHAM J.A.		
182			BLAGG E.D.		
183			PALMER R.T.		
184			JAGO R.B.		
185			ROTHERY A.H.		
186			SMITH T.J.		Posted from 75SQN to 3SQNBUT wef 12 Feb 69. Auth: PT8890 24 Jan 69
187			SANDERS P.J.		Posted from 76SQN to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8377 14 Jan 69
188			SANDERSON K.A.		Posted from 2FOCU to 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8461 16 Jan 69
189			SHIEL P.M.		Posted from 77SQN to 3SQNBUT wef 24 Feb 69. Auth: PT8665 21 Jan 69
190			TAITT T.G.		Posted from 76SQN 3SQNBUT wef 17 Feb 69. Auth: PT8380 14 Jan 69

PERSONNEL OCCURRENCE REPORT

Serial No.....3/69
Page No.....8

NO 3 SQUADRON RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN NSW 2301

Entry No	Number	Rank	Name	Branch/Category or Mustering/Group	Nature of Occurrence
191		Cpl	TAYLOR R.J.		Posted from 481 MNTSQN to
192		AC	GARRETT T.R.		3 SQNBUT Wef 17 Feb 69
193		LAC	COTTRELL R.V.		Auth: PT8195 10 Jan 69
194		LAC	ROBINSON D.		
195		Cpl	GRIFFIN J.R.		
196		LAC	HARRISON L.A.		
197		AC	DIBLEY B.W.		
198		LAC	NEWBURY G.A.		
199		LAC	HARVEY C.W.		
[redacted]		LAC	UNICOMB D.R.		
[redacted]		AC	McCLELLAND B.W.		
202		LAC	TURNER S.E.		
203		AC	WATSON C.A.		
204		Cpl	STEWART R.J.		
205		LAC	COX N.F.		
206		LAC	HANSBERRY G.J.		
[redacted]		Cpl	WALKER P.R.		Posted from BASQNBUT to 3 SQNBUT Wef 12 Feb 69 Auth: PT8901 24 Jan 69
208		Cpl	WHITE C.		Posted from 76 SQN to
209		LAC	MAHER R.J.		3 SQNBUT Wef 17 Feb 69
210		AC	MESSER D.R.		Auth: PT8197 10 Jan 69

(b) ENLISTMENTS, PROMOTIONS, REMUSTERS ETC

211

212

[redacted]

213

[redacted]

214

215

PERSONNEL OCCURRENCE REPORT

Serial No.....3/69
Page No.....9

NO 3 SQUADRON RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN NSW 2301

Entry No	Number	Rank	Name	Branch/Category or Mustering/Group	Nature of Occurrence
216			LITTLE F.P.		To draw Malaysia Outlay Allowance of $40 on Posting to 3 SQNBUT Auth: CO Unit
217			CHAPPELOW P.		To draw Malaysia Outlay Allowance of $40 on Posting to 3SQNBUT Auth: CO Unit.
	CORRECTIONS				
			CHAPPELOW P.		POR Serial No 1/69 28 Jan 69. Delete entry No 103.

Parts C,D,E,F,G,H and J - Nil
Final page of POR 3/69 of nine pages.