



The Old Fliers Group

Attached to the Royal Aero Club of WA (Inc).

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Bulletin Sheet No 10, February 2005

Last Meeting

The numbers keep increasing. There were over 60 people at the last lunch meeting in January to hear Tom Scotland talk of his experiences in WWII. It was a talk with a difference. Robert Campbell, a new member, penned his thoughts on Tom's talk. He sent the following to me by e-mail.

Tom turned out to be a very modest, humble man for all his achievements as a bomber pilot during the WWII. He enlisted in the RAAF in September 1941 and did his training under the Empire Air Training Scheme at Pearce, Cunderdin and Geraldton, flying the Tiger Moth and the Avro Anson. In 1942, Tom sailed out of Melbourne on the *Rimutaka*, via the Panama Canal, New York and on to Bristol. Tom's training in England started at Bournemouth, flying the Airspeed Oxford before being transferred to Abingdon, flying the Whitley bomber and later the Halifax bomber.

Tom didn't talk much about his exploits as a Halifax bomber pilot flying Pathfinder missions over Germany out of Italy, but rather talked about his, what seemed like an agonizing decision to actually *write about* his exploits. It appeared that he couldn't bring himself to write about these times for many years, but in the mid-1980's a chain of events, and with the encouragement of his wife, Laurel, made him decide that his story was worth telling.

A most interesting event that he slipped in was when he crashed his Halifax near Leeds. The inboard port motor caught fire and he knew he needed to put the plane down quickly (or I guess the wing would fall off). He ordered his crew to bail out and on coming down through the clouds saw a strip of vacant land between houses. The strip of land turned out to be a glen (Tom's word for a valley). He crash landed in this glen and luckily walked away from the wrecked aircraft. While watching his sorry aircraft burn a small boy of about ten years old came up to him and tugging on his trousers said, "mister, can I have the tail?" Forty or so years later Tom returned to the scene on an invitation from the town and a gentleman came up to him and said "*can I have the tail?*"

His talk held the floor in awe for forty minutes and I know at times, I had some tears in my eyes - the heroic achievements of men such as Tom will never be understood by the likes of us of the younger generation who never experienced action in the war. This makes us so lucky that we had men like Tom to fight for us. (I was four years old when the war started)

Tom, we hope you will come back again and talk about some of the actual flying events in your war time life.

R C

FEBRUARY 25th Meeting

The next meeting will be held on **Friday February 25th**, the day before the State Election. The speaker of the day will be Howard Wheatley who will talk on his RAAF flying in WWII and later as a commercial pilot with Airlines (WA) Ltd. If he has time he might cover some of his private flying exploits where, during the ownership of 11 aircraft, both fixed wing and rotary, he established a number of flying records.

Change to March Meeting

It has been brought to my notice that the published date of the March meeting is March 25th, Good Friday! Consequently, we have decided to postpone the March meeting by one week. It will now be held on **Friday April 1st**. (This is no April Fool's joke) Please make a note in your diary now so that you can hear Tony Munday's talk on "*Canberras and Cameras.*"

Publications

Tom Scotland publications on his wartime exploits will be available at the next meeting. Similarly, Alan Mitchell and Ron East have told their stories and will also be available at very modest prices.

Tour

Staunch member of the OFG, Tony Munday, is organising a great tour for 10 to 16 persons to Hong Kong, England, Wales and Ireland at the end of May.

Details of the tour are available from Tony on **Phone** 9386 3902, **E-mail:** lunarian@cygnus.uwa.edu.au, or **Post** at 57 Circe Circle, DALKEITH. WA 6009. It sounds great.

Diary Details

February, Friday 25th
Howard Wheatley, "Military and Commercial Flying."

March – Now April 1st.
Tony Munday, "Canberras and Cameras."

April Friday 29th
Ron Minchin, "Towing Gliders to Arnham."

May Friday 27th
Alec Kerr, "A look at WWII."

Hope to see you on Friday the 25th

Brian Hernan