



## The Old Fliers Group

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

Coordinator: Brian John, Ph 9883 8001

### Bulletin Sheet No 12, April 2005

#### Last Meeting

Not even a day of bad weather could prevent the usual number of members from attending the March get-together (held on April 1<sup>st</sup> due to Good Friday falling on our designated meeting date).

Our *mini speaker*, Doreen Newell, told us something of her experiences as an air hostess in the days when the MMA fleet consisted mainly of DC3s, Doves and Ansons. They were tough days - no air conditioning in the aircraft nor on the ground - and at a cruise speed of 150 knots, the DC3 took all day to get to Port Hedland.

She reminded us of how the turbulence caused difficulties when serving hot stew from an urn onto plates in bumpy conditions where she could hardly stand. "Up to her elbows in stew", is how she put it.

She told us of catering problems when a buffet was accidentally left behind, and of another that had been attacked by ants!

Today we expect a high standard of accommodation throughout the North West, but in Doreen's days the MMA crews often slept on hotel verandas - and in mixed company too. Can you imagine that happening today?

#### Speaker of the Day

The speaker of the day was Tony Munday. All who attended were amazed at what Tony has packed into his life. He told four short stories, each of which, if published, would be a best seller. I was on the edge of my seat as he told us of the double flameout in a Canberra aircraft over Scotland, and of the 145 mile glide to a successful landing.

His last story covered an experience as a TV cameraman in Cambodia where bullets and rockets were flying instead of aeroplanes. It was a job where death was around every corner.

Thank you Tony for a most interesting talk, and for taking us into the world of danger and excitement without leaving the comfort of the Club.

#### Membership List

It has been suggested by a number of members that, in a future bulletin, we circulate an up-to-date membership list, complete with contact details. The idea is that members might contact each other as needed. Bearing in mind that some people prefer to maintain a degree of privacy, could I ask anyone who

has an objection to such publication contact me at the next meeting or by phone on 6389 1513 to have their details suppressed.

When the list is eventually published, we ask members to use it for personal contact only.

#### Ninetieth Anniversary

Military aviation in Australia took a major step forward ninety years ago, on April 20<sup>th</sup> 1915, when the first unit of the Australian Flying Corps left for Mesopotamia (now Iraq).

A Turkish threat to the Anglo-Persian oil pipeline and the strategically important area at the head of the Persian Gulf convinced British strategists of the need to open a second front against the Turks.

The Australian Government was asked to provide aircraft, airmen and transport to support the Anglo-Indian forces assigned to the campaign. It responded by dispatching four officers, 41 men, and transport - called the Mesopotamian Half Flight in April 1915. Arriving too late to help secure the Shatt-el-Arab and the oil pipeline, the Half Flight joined the British advance on Baghdad in an unsuccessful attempt to exert pressure on the Turks in the east.

#### Next Meeting

The next meeting of the group will be held on Friday April 29<sup>th</sup> at the Royal Aero Club. The *mini speaker* of the day will again be John Rolston who will take us into the cockpit as he explains the technique of aerial mustering.

The *main speaker* of the day will be Ron Minchin, who will talk on his experiences in WWII when he was involved in glider towing for the Battle of Arnhem. It was the largest airborne operation conducted during WWII.

While the operation was a major allied initiative it was not without its problems. In September 1944 the Battle of Arnhem started when the first of 35 000 paratroopers were dropped to secure a bridgehead over the Rhine. It was the opening thrust in a push toward the Rhur and a possible early end to the war. Ron will tell us of the preparation and actual flight to Arnhem.

Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan

(The editor apologies for mis-spelling Arnhem in previous bulletins).