



## The Old Fliers Group

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

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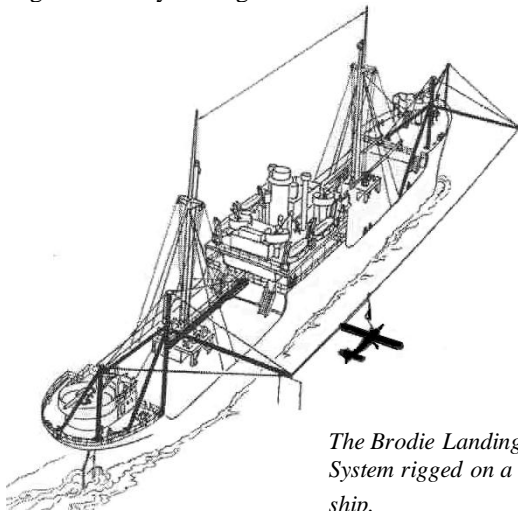
### Bulletin Sheet No 14, June 2005

#### Last Meeting

Last month's *Speaker of the Day* was Professor Alex Kerr who was shot down over Germany in 1941. He spoke of the first Australian airman to escape during WWI, and of his own experiences while sharing a dungeon with Douglas Bader, and later of digging a 42 metre tunnel to break out of Stalag Luft III. He was number eleven in a total of over fifty prisoners to break out on that occasion. On recapture, he participated in the planning of many other escapes from a variety of other camps. Apart from planning escapes, he also had time to plan his future – by 1945 he had achieved two years progress toward a degree that eventually led to a successful academic career.

All who attended were engrossed in his riveting stories.

The *Mini Speaker* was John Markham, who told of the discovery of a dilapidated 1944 model Stinson L5B in the back of a hangar in a remote part of India. After five trips back to India to deal with the bureaucracy, he eventually negotiated the purchase and arranged for the remains to be shipped to Australia for restoration. Over three years, the Stinson has been beautifully restored to its original military configuration.



*The Brodie Landing System rigged on a ship.*

John also told how that the aircraft type was used in the development of the unusual Brodie Landing System in the latter stages of WWII in the USA. The aircraft was fitted with a hook on a 2.5 metre boom on top of the aircraft, at about its C of G. The craft was hoisted onto a cable suspended between pylons about 10 metres tall. At takeoff, the aircraft, about 5 metres clear of the ground, accelerated along the wire and when flying speed was reached it disengaged from the overhead gear to fly away. (Who says that *fly by wire* is a new invention.)

For “landing”, a loop was suspended beneath the main wire at the up-wind end of the system. The pilot flew the Stinson beneath the wire so that the hook on the top of the aircraft engaged the loop – the aircraft decelerated while sliding along the wire.

The system was developed to launch spotter aircraft where the advance of the troops in the Pacific area was outstripping the forces ability to build forward aerodromes. It was also developed for amphibious operations by attaching the system to a ship.

#### Name Tags

As a low budget organisation we try to keep our costs to a minimum. Our second largest expense is the purchase of plastic name holders that we wear at each meeting. If you have any spares at home, could you donate them to our cause at the next meeting. Ta.

#### Who said that?

“The Piper Cub is the safest airplane in the world - it can just barely kill you.”

*Max Stanley, Northrop test pilot.*

#### Basic Flight Rules:

1. Try to fly in the air.
2. Try to stay in the middle of the air.
3. Do not go near the edges of the air.
4. The edges of the air can be recognized by the appearance of ground, buildings, trees and water.

*A very careful pilots.*

When a prang seems inevitable, endeavour to strike the softest, cheapest object in the vicinity as slowly and gently as possible.

*A WWII RAF instructor.*

#### Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Friday June 24<sup>th</sup> at the Royal Aero Club, getting under way at 12 noon. The *mini speaker* of the day will be Frank Cox who will talk about, and display, some WWII memorabilia that he has in his collection.

The *speaker of the day* will be Lachie McTaggart, who will tell us of some WWII experiences and how he and Frank Burt flew a light twin from England to Australia in the early 1950s.

Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan