



The Old Fliers Group

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

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Last Meeting

The October *mini speaker* was Brian Walley whose interesting and amusing talk on the lighter side of life in a POW camp was appreciated by all. He spoke experiments with 'hooch', an almost poisonous drink, and of mini "test matches" in cricket, rugby and ice hockey. The prisoners made all sorts of equipment including magnetic compasses from a gramophone record, a needle and a razor blade. Good food was scarce, but they managed to make Christmas cakes and puddings from a variety of ingredients. Brian showed that even in adversity there was room for humour.

The *main speaker* of the day was our visitor from New Zealand, Owen Foster. He covered his experiences during WWII in New Zealand, Canada and Europe. He arrived in Canada in the winter of 1942 and quickly had to get used to the freezing conditions. While in Canada he spent time as a Maintenance Test Pilot and flew a range of aircraft including the Cessna Crane, Fairy Battle, Oxford, Ventura, Halifax and Blenheim.

After being posted to England he flew operations with New Zealand, English and Australian squadrons before being shot down while on a bombing mission. After ditching in the North Sea and was rescued by a fishing boat with a German/Dutch crew. He spent time in a POW camp where escape attempts were the order of the day. Owen made reference to sharing a room with Douglas Bader for a time. Some of his experiences feature in a book titled *Gestapo Hunters*.

Sincere thanks go to both men for entertaining us with their stories. It was obvious that fate played a large part in the survival of each man.

Books for Christmas

Sometimes family members find it difficult to select a gift for a loved one at Christmas, or for a birthday. Well here's your big chance to drop a hint. A number of our group have written or contributed to books on aviation. All are a "good read" and make an ideal gift. As well, it is a chance to help reward the authors, and in some cases, help a charity or research organisation of their choice. Circle one or two of the following.

Title, Author, and Availability are listed below.

"A Flying Career" by **Ron East:**
Ph 9389 7214, Email: ronald_east@bigpond.com

"The Flying Inventor" by **Alan Mitchell:**
Ph 9446 3325, Email: alanmitchell@arach.net.au

"Kittyhawk Pilots" by **Cyril Ayris:** (and Stan Watt)
Available at the AFA Museum

"Wingover and Dive", by **Stan Watt:**
Available at the AFA Museum

"Silk and Barbed Wire" by **Brian Walley:**
Available at the AFA Museum

"The Cat has Nine Lives" by **Fred Robins:**
Available at the AFA Museum

"Voice from the Stars" and *"After Voices from the Stars"* by **Tom Scotland:** Email: tescot@bigpond.com

New Releases

"Flight Times" by **Dave Gibson:**
Available at the AFA Museum and Royal Aero Club.
This book covers Dave's aviation experiences over the last 30 years. Profits go the Cancer Foundation.

"Lewy of the Inland Skies" by **George Lewis:**
This is the unique story of the most colourful pilot in the Eastern Goldfields. George penned his experiences in WWI as an explosives expert and as a pilot in the RFC. Later, he introduced aviation to Kalgoorlie and surrounding districts. He provided a much needed aerial medical service to remote settlements.

The book will be officially launched on Saturday November 26th at the AFA Museum at 10.00 am. (That's the morning after our next meeting.) It will be on sale at the AFA Museum, John Bailey on Ph 9582 5222 and through the RFDS in Perth and Kalgoorlie. Profits go the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Year's End

The November meeting will be the last for the year. There will be no meeting in December as the last Friday is too close to New Year. The first meeting for 2006 will take place on Friday, January 27th. Mark it in your diary now.

Next Meeting

The last meeting for 2005 of the OFG will be held at the Royal Aero Club at 12.00 noon on Friday November 25th. Our main speaker will be Tony Abbott who has some stories to tell about his time in the Fleet Air Arm and as a pilot in the corporate world. The mini speaker, Howard Wheatley, has a tale to tell about his experiences in choppers. Sounds interesting. Eh?

Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan