



The Old Fliers' Group

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

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Last Meeting

The usual number of members arrived for lunch and to hear our speakers. The **Mini Speaker**, Peter Yates, introduced his subject – Flying for Fun. He briefly talking about the Bill Wylie fleet that consisted of the P-51 Mustang, the T-6 Texan and the L-39 Albatross jet.

Peter then talked about his involvement with a group called *Fighter Combat* who fly Chinese *Nanchang* aircraft for fun—in a very serious way. Four ex-Chinese Air Force basic trainers are owned by group members and flown by ex-RAAF and airline pilots.



Three Nanchangs in formation.

Peter took his audience through a start-up and taxi for a stream takeoff on a typical joyride where the flying and aerobatic manoeuvres are tailored to the joyrider's expectations. He summarised with a mention of the aircraft's specifications and performance figures. All-in-all, a most interesting session.

The **Speaker of the Day** was George Gilbert, well-known aviator in Western Australia. After learning to fly in RAAF during WWII, George continued flying – for the most part running his own charter company until he reached the age of seventy-five.

During his talk, George concentrated mainly on 79 Squadron and the Spitfire that he flew in the islands to the north of Australia. He reminded us of what a great aircraft the Spitfire was; it had great speed and manoeuvrability, but no room in the cockpit. On many trips he was partly escorted by a larger aircraft with a navigator on board who had the luxury of a map desk.

George's talk was a thoroughly interesting coverage of his time in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. His story was presented in a matter-of-fact manner, but it became obvious to all that he was a most competent aviator both during the war and after.

George's personal Spitfire, JG819, was flown by another pilot who ran out of brakes. The result is shown below.



George's Spitfire on its back.

After the war, the aircraft was purchased and restored to flying condition and is now at the Duxton Museum in the UK, and is still flown on special occasions.



George's Spitfire after restoration.

Thank go to both Peter and George for their most entertaining presentations. They were appreciated by all present.

Next Meeting July 25th

Brian John will be relaxing at an island paradise to the north of Australia, and your editor will be making his way to Oshkosh when the next meeting takes place. Bob Russell will be in the chair to introduce Paul Falconer-West who will talk on the history of No 25 Squadron during World War II and Mal Yeo will talk on the history of the old Caversham Aerodrome.

Hope you can make it on Friday July 25 at noon.

Brian Hernan