



The Old Fliers' Group

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

Coordinator: Brian John, Ph 9883 8001

Bulletin No 65, February 2010

January Meeting

Not even the forecast of a very hot day kept members away from the January meeting. While the air conditioner barely coped with the near 40°C heat, members were entertained by two very interesting speakers.

The *Speaker of the Day* was Kevin Gomm. He spoke on the Imperial Japanese Navy and Army Air Force that attacked land targets and shipping in Western Australia between 20 February 1942 and 27 September 1943.

The Japanese attacks during that period are a relatively little-known chapter of our State's history. The total number of Japanese aerial reconnaissance missions is not known, but it is certain that there were sixteen air raids on Western Australian targets where bombs were dropped and which included Wyndham, Drysdale, Derby, Broome, Onslow, Port Hedland and Exmouth Gulf, as well as the bombing of the SS *Koolama* and the shelling of Port Gregory just north of Geraldton.

Most members were surprised at the number of attacks when Kevin quoted facts and figures relating to each event. It was obvious that he had carried out an enormous amount of research, and his talk was thorough and interesting.

The first bombing took place on 20 February 1942 off Cape Londonderry when a Japanese aircraft dropped bombs on the SS *Koolama* as it steamed toward Wyndham and Darwin. Little damage was done and another aircraft returned the next day to repeat the attack, which ultimately resulted in the loss of the ship.

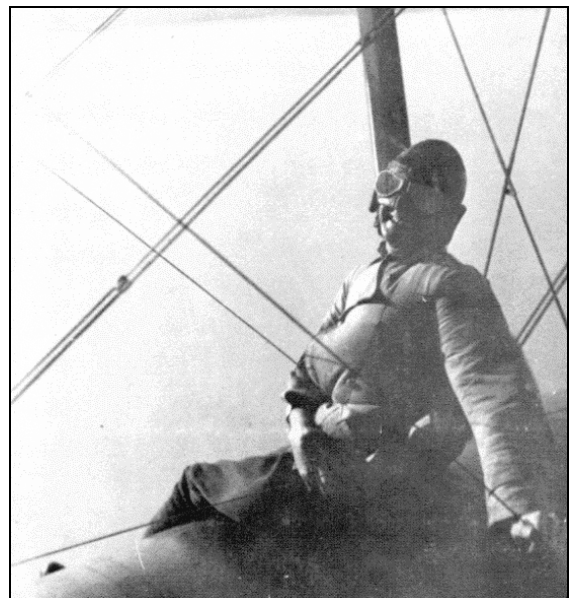
Kevin has produced a book on the subject which covers all of the action in great detail. It is titled: *Red Sun on the Kangaroo Paw* and is available from:
Kevin Gomm, PO Box 2186, High Wycombe,
W.A. 6057 for the cost of \$40.00 (includes postage)

Also well worth reading are the following:
Broome's One Day War, by Mervyn Prime, and
Flight of Diamonds, by William Tyler

Mervyn Prime concentrates on the most devastating of all air raids on Western Australian soil, that on Broome on 3 March, 1942, where there was great loss of life. Tyler covers the shooting down of a Dutch DC3, just north of Broome on the same day. The DC3 was carrying a consignment of diamonds that were never fully recovered.

The meeting finished with an interesting short talk by Murray Fletcher who, as a schoolboy, was in Port Hedland when the three bombings on that town took place – on 30 July 1942, 17 August 1942 and 16 August 1943.

He also told us about Len Taplin, a former Western Australian Airways pilot, who operated the power station in Hedland at that time. In earlier days, Len once hitched a ride on the wing of a WAA aircraft when there was no room in the passenger compartment.



Len Taplin in flight.

Call for Cash

If you haven't managed to pay your annual sub, there is still time. The cost is \$10.00 and it can be paid at the next meeting, or any future meeting should you wish. Alternatively, you can mail a cheque to:

Brian Hernan, 1 / 4 Kings Park Ave., Crawley,
6009.

If you pay by cheque, it must be made out to the
"Royal Aero Club".

Marion McCall and the Dawn to Dusk

You may recall that Marion spoke to us in June last year (she is Bishop of Bunbury's wife who used a Cessna 172 to communicate with parishioners). In August last year, Marion entered the 2009 Dawn to Dusk Competition – her third attempt. In 2004 and 2007 Marion entered the same event and won on both occasions. It required a trip to London on both occasions to receive her award.

This year Marion, with the assistance of Wendy Mann, a fellow member of Australian Women Pilot's Association, had spent nine months planning a re-enactment flight of Australia's First Air Mail Service along the Western Australian coast.

Unfortunately, Marion was unable to get away from Bunbury for almost a fortnight due to very inclement weather and so could not proceed with the competition, which had to be completed by August 31st.

It was a great shame, as Marion and Wendy had put a mountain of work into it and had involved the Year 4-5 students from Geraldton Grammar School and the Year 4-5 students at Broome Primary School in the project.

Odd Poetry

A piece of poetry has come my way and I thought that some OFG members might get a laugh out of it. I have no idea of its origin, but I can imagine it being written during WWII by a mechanic or engineer with a lot of time on his hands.

You must imagine that you have a German accent as you read it.

Chilius der Diesel Enchineer

Liddle Chilius, haff no fear,
You'll soon be an enchineer.
Onwards, onwards you must go,
'Cause we love the Diesel so.

All important, neffer giff,
A statement that is positiff.
Und if you must, be sure to throw,
As much baloney as you know.

Call a conference with the boys,
Try to see who makes most noise.
Dictate ledders, lots of vords,
Spread the stuff that feeds the birds.

If there's trouple mit injectors,
Call a bunch of schmart inspectors.
Dey will get into a huddle,
Den there'll be another muddle.

Ven she von't run like she oughter,
Turn off all the cooling vater.
Den the block turn red and blue,
Caused from too much B.T.U.

Oh! Alas. (and sense alack),
Der exhaust ist very black.
My! Vot can der troupple be?
Maybe leaks out M.E.P.

Ven you feel too much vibration,
Send a message to the nation,
Calling for those real schmart boys,
Mit der fancy 'lectric toys.

Dey vill sneak up on dose chiggles,
Mit some chuckles and some giggles.
Pretty soon you will know,
Vot makes der diesel chiggle so.

Vatch der charts swell up and grow,
Ven der dip-stick starts to glow.
Und the fingers start a rhythm,
Figuring out those logarithm.

Liddle Chulius haff no fear,
You'll soon be an enchineer,
Und eventually you will know,
Vot makes Diesel enchines go.

February Meeting

This month's February meeting will be held, as usual, at noon at the Royal Aero Club on the last Friday of the month – in this case Friday 26th February. Our *Speaker of the Day* will be Joe Ward again, who will tell us about his experiences as he clocked up over 10,000 hours in choppers. You may remember that Joe spoke to us in September last year about flying Mosquitos and Canberras on aerial reconnaissance work. Yours truly will talk on a record-breaking flight out of Perth in 1946.

I hope to see you there at noon on the 26th.

Brian Hernan