



## The Old Fliers' Group

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

Coordinator: Brian John

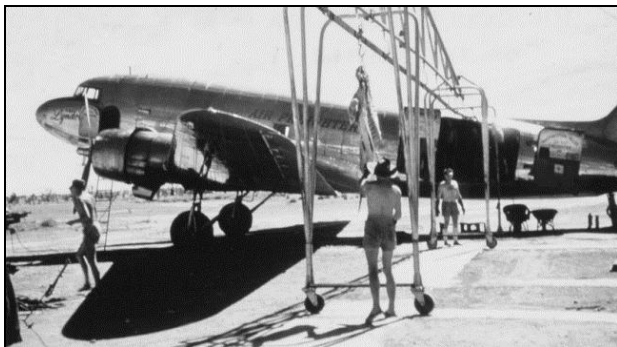
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#### Air Beef

As speaker of the day, Reg Adkins told us about the Air Beef Scheme that operated out of Glenroy station in the Kimberley Region of Western Australia. The station was often inaccessible by road so a plan was developed to construct an abattoir, freezing facilities and an aerodrome. After preliminary work was completed, the scheme got under way in 1948. Cattle from Glenroy and some other surrounding stations were slaughtered, quartered, boned and chilled overnight and the following day were flown 161 nautical miles to Wyndham where it was processed and frozen, then shipped to the United Kingdom.

In 1954 MacRobertson Miller Airlines took over the contract and used the DC-3, VH-MML, which had been converted to a freighter by the removal of unnecessary interior accessories, even including the autopilot. Three trips per day were flown between the hours of 0600 and 1800.

An essential part of the Air Beef scheme was the back-loading of miscellaneous equipment, including stores, fuel, furniture, fencing wire, machinery and other requirements for Glenroy and several nearby stations. In this way, the scheme is made economically practicable.



*VH-MML being loaded at Glenroy*

Reg told us of the primitive living conditions where close to twenty men lived in a Nissen Hut – no air conditioning in those days. While on the ground at Glenroy, MML was serviced in the open air and in the hot sun. Naturally, all staff looked forward to a frosty beer at the end of the day's work.

#### The USS Langley

As Mini Speaker, your editor told the story of the ill-fated voyage of the USS *Langley* which sailed from Fremantle to deliver thirty-two Warhawk (Kittyhawk) aircraft to the Netherlands East Indies in the dark days of 1942.

The *Langley* had an interesting history – it started as a collier. In 1922 it had its superstructure removed and replaced with a flight deck – thus becoming the first US aircraft carrier. In 1927, after the launch of the purpose-built aircraft carriers USS *Lexington* and USS *Saratoga*, the *Langley* was converted to a seaplane tender. Just over 40% of the flight deck was removed to facilitate the transport, loading and servicing of seaplanes.

Three months after Pearl Harbour, the *Langley* was in Darwin as part of the American force to counter the advance of the Japanese toward Australia. By mid-February 1942 the British had withdrawn from Singapore, and Darwin had been bombed. In a desperate effort to help the Dutch, the *Langley* was despatched to Fremantle to pick up the Warhawks that had been flown to Maylands from Brisbane.

The *Langley* sailed from Fremantle on 22 February and a week later, when about 200 miles from its destination in Java, it was bombed by the Japanese. History tells us that it was a pointless loss of men and equipment.

There was a deal of discussion about the exact route taken by the Warhawks when they were towed from Maylands to Fremantle. If anyone has any detailed information your editor would love to know.

#### Snapshot of Hours

Below is a summary of the aeronautical experience at the 28 February 2011 meeting. Surprise, surprise!

##### Pilot Hours

Fixed Wing	330 402
Rotary Wing	16 610
Gliders	13 315
<b>Total Pilot Hours</b>	<b>360 327</b>

Crew Hours\* 13 509

**Total Aeronautical Experience at the February meeting 373 836 hrs**

\*Crew Hours cover hours logged by, navigators, flight engineers, wireless air gunners, tail gunners, etc.

#### April Meeting

The next OFG meeting will be held at noon on Friday 29 April. Come and hear Rob Vaughn-Johnson talk on his experiences as a chopper pilot for Idi Amin in Uganda – and more.

Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan