



The Old Fliers' Group

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

Coordinator: Brian John – Phone 9582 5233

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January Meeting

The year got off to a good start with nearly 100 members in attendance. After the usual formalities to get the show under way, your editor gave a “potted history”, in graphic form, to show the sequence of major events in World War II. The idea being, to pave the way for the *Speaker of the Day* by pointing out the areas of operation that were to be covered by him.

Speaker of the Day

The *Speaker of the Day* was John “Bomber” Bailey who told us of his training to private pilot licence before the war and later about his training on Tiger Moths, Harvards and Hurricanes in the RAF.

In late 1942 John’s squadron was moved to Algiers as part of *Operation Torch* at the start of the North Africa Campaign. After consolidating in Algeria, the Allies moved eastward and John saw action in Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. After the defeat of Rommel, John’s squadron moved to the Middle-east where he converted onto Wellingtons and took part in bombing raids on Sicily.

Next he converted onto Liberators and after the Allies gained a foothold in Italy he moved first to Taranto and then in Foggia, flying out of Amendola. Missions out of Amendola took him on night bombing raids to Northern Italy, Germany, Austria and Yugoslavia.



The Hurricane at Amendola, with a jerry can.

It was during that time that he *acquired* a Hawker Hurricane from the British army – his own *personal* aircraft. After much bargaining with members of the US Air Force, John gained access to a *private supply* of fuel – delivered in hundreds of jerry cans. His friendship with the Americans developed further and between them they fitted the Hurricane with two long-range fuel tanks from a Mustang – but they weren’t for fuel.

It was organised for John to fly to Paris to pick up a supply of French lingerie for the members of the US forces to send home to their wives and sweethearts. He

also managed to include some hard liquor in the load. The trip was so successful that he carried out a second one.

However, it wasn’t all fun. The bombing raids were mostly at night and very dangerous. Losses were high.



Liberator operations out of Amendola near Foggia.

John described how, in August and September 1944 he flew missions to Warsaw to support the Warsaw Uprising. Flights were conducted at night without fighter escort and on arrival the aircraft descended to a very low altitude to release their much needed cargo.

Members found John’s talk most informative and humorous, and responded with a well-earned round of applause. Thank you John for a top show.

Annual Subscription

The annual subscription of \$10.00 for the year 2012 may 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. Cheques must be made out to “Royal Aero Club”.

AOPA Meeting

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), in conjunction with the Club and CASA, will host a Safety Seminar at the Royal Aero Club on Sat. 3rd March 2012. The format will be similar to that of the OFG meetings, but with a morning and afternoon session. All OFG members are welcome. More details at the Feb. meeting.

Next Meeting

The February meeting will get under way with a medal presentation! and then we will hear from Derek Hutton who will tell us how he organised special flights for Queen Elizabeth II and Margaret Thatcher.

Lunch gets under way at noon – hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan