



The Old Fliers' Group

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

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Next Meeting

The next meeting of the group will be on Friday 31st May.

Last Meeting

We had two impressive speakers at our last meeting. Murray Fletcher was the *Speaker of the Day* with an amazing World War II story, and Ken Pittman was the *Mini Speaker* with his recollections of the 1952 Farnborough Air Show.

Murray's story came from his friendship with the American pilot who flew the Lockheed P-38 *Lightning* in the Mediterranean area during WWII. The story started with the display of a painting that depicted the P-38 and an Me109 in formation off the coast of Sicily in 1943 – a most unusual occurrence.



Frederic Arnold in his P-38 Lightning in 1943.

The event did actually take place. Both pilots had met in combat on three occasions and had got to recognise each other. The ME109 was flown by Karl Meunster, operating out of north-west Sicily, and the P-38 by Frederic Arnold who flew mostly out of Tunisia. They had evidently developed a great respect for each other during combat, but once the jousting was over they treated each other with respect of gentlemen.

Over a period of time, each recognising the others aircraft, in fact on the third occasion that they met the German had an allied radio installed which allowed him to recognise Frederic's voice.

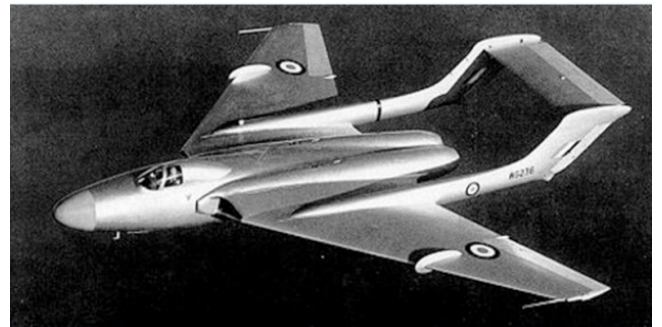
The title of Murray's talk was "Strange Bedfellows", and it certainly was the case, but the story had a sad ending where Karl was shot down and killed.

Some years ago after hearing the story, Murray communicated with Frederic and via email they became firm friends. In 2004 Murray visited Frederic and his family at his home in Los Angeles.

In an unusual twist, Murray, knowing that his talk would feature on You Tube in a matter of days, finished with his personal best wishes to Frederic and family in the full knowledge that Frederic would view the talk on the internet. That's a new twist to our OFG meetings!

The other speaker at the April meeting was Ken Pittman who told of his experience at the 1952 Farnborough Air Show. Ken and his father attended the show and took up a position with a good view of proceedings. They were just two of the 130 000 people who attended the show over four days where the "best of British" was on display.

The highlight of the show was the display of the revolutionary DH 110 flown by John Derry. In a spectacular demonstration he sped over the crowd and pulled up in a steep climb. Then to the horror of the crowd the aircraft disintegrated with debris showering onto the crowd and killing twenty-eight onlookers.



The De Havilland DH 110.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Old Fliers Group will be at the Royal Aero Club starting at noon on Friday 31st May. Our *Speaker of the Day* will be Howard Wheatley who will tell us about his experiences as a Beaufort pilot in New Guinea during WWII.

Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan