



The Old Fliers' Group

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

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Next Meeting

Since our next scheduled meeting date fell on Good Friday the meeting has been put back to Friday 5 April, (therefore we will have two meetings in April).

Note both dates in your diary: 5th April and 26th April.

Next meeting: Friday 5th April

Parking

Jandakot Airport Holdings has arranged a parking dispensation for our next meeting. Parking will be free between the hours of 10.30 am and 2.30 pm on 5 April.

Brian John Steps Down

At our last meeting Brian John, one of the founders of the Old Fliers Group, stepped down as coordinator after a decade in that role.

Long-time member Stan Schur, who was privy to the news, proposed that Life Membership be awarded to Brian. Consequently, an appropriate certificate was prepared and presented.



Brian John

In his response, Brian, who was visibly moved by the occasion, stated that the time was right for him to step down so that a younger person might take over the role.

Members displayed their appreciation of his outstanding contribution by acclamation.

February Speaker of the Day

While the OFG membership has been treated to talks on all manner of aviation-related subjects, there had been none, so far, on formation flying. But that changed at the February meeting with an excellent presentation by retired Wing Commander Ric Seagar. Ric had served as a pilot for twenty-three years in the RAAF, seven of those years in the Roulettes Formation Aerobatic Team, and nearly five years as leader. Ric can be proud of his

achievements as gaining appointment to the Roulettes is a rare distinction.

His talk was partly based on video footage from five air shows at which the Roulettes performed in Macchi aircraft. The majority of the ground-to-air footage was taken by professional camera operators from local TV stations. Ric's commentary covered the full range of manoeuvres as seen from a spectator's viewpoint.

As well, there was on-board air-to-air video coverage that proved to be sensational. As the videos were played, Ric described the finer points of station keeping and formation changing, plus descriptions of inverted image formation, formation loops, rolls and bomb bursts. Members got close-up views of some "very interesting situations", plus a frightening close call and a mid-air collision. Fortunately, no one was injured.

Members now have some understanding of the demands, skills and precision required of a Roulette pilot. Thank you Ric.

Corunna Downs

Your editor gave a brief account of the one of the best-kept secrets of Australian involvement in World War II. It related to the camouflaged and carefully hidden No. 73 Operational Base Unit known as Corunna Downs. The air base in the desolate semi-desert spinifex country, about 35km south of Marble Bar, was built to handle the Liberators heavy four-engined bomber. The long bitumen runways, measuring 7000 ft and 5000 ft, were constructed in 1942 and used to launch attacks against the Japanese who had advanced to Java and nearby islands. Australians from 25 Squadron and Americans from 380 Bombardment Group carried out the attacks.

Munitions and fuel were railed in from Port Hedland in such volumes that the railway was worn out. The base became home to over 200 RAAF and Australian Army personnel who lived in most trying conditions.

Next Meeting

The next meeting, on 5 April, will be a milestone meeting for the Old Fliers Group. It will be our one hundredth.

Our *Keynote Speaker* will be Geoffrey Thomas; his talk is titled, *WA's Extraordinary Airline Growth – Will Perth Airport ever be ready?*

See you there.

Brian Hernan