



The Old Fliers' Group

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

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NEXT MEETING Friday September 25th

August Meeting Report **Flying Sunderlands in WW2**

Andy Anderson was the *Speaker of the Day* at our August meeting. About eighty members listened with interest as he described his involvement in aviation, both before and during WWII.

During 1938 and 1939, Andy flew gliders at City Beach, West Subiaco and Lake Pinjar. At the same time he was an apprentice engineer at MMA at Maylands. After joining the RAAF in 1940 he went through the typical pilot training courses for that time.

On completion he was posted to the Eastern States and then on to Canada. He made good use of his time by training as a pilot and studying navigation. On arrival in the UK in 1941 he was posted to the RAAF No.10 Squadron on Short Sunderland flying boats.



The Short Sunderland.

The 30-ton Sunderland, initially designed for long-range passenger service, was readily converted to a patrol aircraft. It carried 2,500 gallons of fuel – sufficient for over twelve hours on patrol. It bristled with defensive armament, with guns at the nose, mid-upper, dorsal and tail positions; and it carried bombs, mines and depth charges to engage the German U-boats in what became known as the *Battle of the Atlantic*.

Britain was in serious trouble at the time and heavily reliant on North American war equipment and provisions, which were transported across the Atlantic in convoys of ships. Andy's squadron, and others, became involved in flying missions over the Atlantic to protect the convoys and attack the German U-boats. Andy's stories about those missions and associated events were highly descriptive and at times quite moving. He received a standing ovation at the end of his delivery.

Mini-speaker

Our *Mini-Speaker* for September was Frank Cocks who brought along his Lee Enfield .303 rifle (downgraded to police standards to render it useless as a firearm). A show of hands revealed that about three-quarters of those in attendance had received training on the rifle type.

Frank gave a vivid description of an incident which occurred while he was on guard duty at Pearce Air Force Base during his national service training in the 1950s. In a dark area near some parked aircraft he challenged an officer on a push bike. The officer, who was far from sober, got such a shock that he fell off his bike and then proceeded to 'challenge Frank'. He didn't stand a chance. Frank had the bayonet attached to his trusty .303 quickly had the upper hand.



The Lee Enfield .303 and bayonet.

Anniversaries

The 70th anniversary of VP day on August 15 1945, was remembered, as was the 75th anniversary of Churchill's famous speech on 18th August 1940, when he stated, "Never before in the field of human conflict ..."

Next Meeting

The next OFG meeting on Friday September 25th will cover the exploits of Hubert Wilkins, polar explorer and aviator. Richard Ewing will give a progress report on the construction of his home-built Sonex aircraft.

The large parking area on the hill behind the Club is no longer a 'pay' parking area. Parking is now free 24/7, and the car park is being heavily used. Let's hope there is space for our members on the last Friday of each month.

See you at the Royal Aero Club just before noon for lunch and our usual proceedings.

Brian Hernan

PS. Stan Schur will have six DVDs of the previous two meetings for sale at \$5.00 per copy.