



The Old Fliers' Group

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

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****NEXT MEETING**** **Friday June 30th 2017.**

Last Meeting

Over eighty members attended the May meeting to hear our two speakers, Tony McGrath and Ken Pittman. They spoke on two very interesting subjects.

Tony McGrath

Tony told the story about his father, Ray, who was a crew member in Dakota A65-115 / VH-RGC when it ditched into the ocean two miles west of East Point, near Darwin, on September 5th 1946. The aircraft was on a test flight when a fire broke out in the starboard engine. As the fire spread the aircraft became difficult to control so the ditching was carried out.

The crew were lucky to survive with a few broken bones and other minor injuries; all were hospitalised after the event. The situation became critical when it was realised that two of the three life rafts would not inflate. There were fears of a shark attack when it was discovered that a number of the crew were bleeding from their wounds.

The wreckage remained undiscovered until late 2006 when a skin diver accidentally happened on it. It is now a heritage site, but alas, many of the artefacts have been scavenged.

Back in 1946, RAAF 36 Transport Squadron was involved in the support of the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces in Japan. The fifty hour plus, round-trip to Japan was carried out on a regular basis by a range of RAAF aircraft – including the Dakota.



The starboard engine of the Dakota (DC-3).

Ken Pittman

Ken's talk, titled 'Imperial War Graves Commission', covered the concept of locating war dead. The first move was made by Sir Adrian Ware in 1915 and by 1917 he was responsible for the Imperial War Graves Commission being established. By the end of World War I there were 1.9 million Commonwealth war dead.

In 1960 the Commission was renamed the Commonwealth War Graves Commission which now looks after 1.7 million graves in 2500 cemeteries in 154 countries. Today it has a staff of 1300 with 850 gardeners.

An online database lists the names and place of commemoration of the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died during the two world wars. It also records details of the 67,000 Commonwealth civilians who died as a result of enemy action in the Second World War.

In Western Australia, at Karrakatta, the Commission looks after 498 war graves of those locals who later succumbed to their war wounds: 16 from WWI, 477 from WWII, and 5 from Vietnam.

Special thanks go to Ken for his in-depth coverage of such an important aspect of our history.



Karrakatta war graves.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at the Royal Aero Club, at noon on Friday June 30th 2017. Tim Jones, who has spoken to us previously, will be talking about his time in the RAAF flying, among other types, the F18 Hornet. Rob Turner will tell us about his attempt at a world record with 74 spins in an Aero Club Cessna C152.

Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan.