



The Old Flier's Group

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

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Last Meeting

Twenty-four members attended the last Old Flier's lunch held on Friday 27th August, 2004. The speaker at the meeting was John House who told us of his daring escapades as an SAS commando in North Africa, Crete and in France in the lead up to D-Day. In that branch of the services there were no Lieutenants – all ranks were equal and no one was called 'Sir'. Members of all ranks helped in the planning of missions and participation in any exercise was voluntary. If you thought the risks too high, you did not have to take part. However, it did not stop John from being involved in missions that, in the minds of his audience, were decidedly risky.

Thank you John for an insight into an aspect of WWII that most have little or no knowledge.

Vale Gordon Eyres

Sadly, we report the passing of our oldest member, Gordon Eyres. Gordon had made recent visits to the Club and attended an OFG luncheon earlier this year. Gordon learned to fly at the Aero Club in 1931 and was inducted into the RAAF at the outbreak of WWII as a Sergeant Pilot. In 1940 he became an instructor and in 1942 was posted to the Empire Flying School in the UK, first as a pupil and then as an instructor with the rank of Squadron Leader.

Later he was posted back to Australia to take over Central Flying School with the rank of Wing Commander. In late 1944 he saw operational flying when he was posted to No. 22 Squadron in New Guinea. After the war he was involved in the family stockbroking business and became a well-known and highly respected businessman in Perth. He continued to take an active role in that business until his seventy-fifth year.

Gordon was one of Western Australia's top sportsmen. He, at one stage, had a single digit golf handicap and won at least one Aerial Derby at Maylands. He represented the State in hockey, baseball and cricket. As a fast bowler he had the distinction of taking Don Bradman's wicket on two occasions. For the State, his best bowling figures were 4 for 7 – including the wicket of Lindsay Hassett. In grade cricket he best bowling figures were 9 for 15 in the first innings and 6 for 22 in the second, making 15 wickets for 37 runs for the match! In another match, as a batsman, he saved the State Team from certain defeat when he scored 42 runs, including 28 in one over, off a bowler who had been selected in the Australian team to tour England.

Gordon's congenial manner and good humour will be remembered with great affection. Our sincere condolences have been conveyed to his wife, Margaret, and family.

Bon Voyage

Brian John and his wife, Viv, have departed for a six-week overseas trip. We wish them a safe and happy journey. In the meantime he has handed the reins over to Bob Russell.

Information Sheets

Thanks to those members who have returned the Information Sheets. They have some most interesting details of member's involvement in aviation and associated areas. Summaries will be included in future Bulletins and may form the basis of future after-lunch discussions. If you have not returned yours yet, you may do so at the next meeting.

Aerial Photography

I have some interesting vertical aerial photography of WWII aerodromes in New Guinea. I will bring them to the next meeting so that those who wish may view them. The most interesting is a series over Nadzab Aerodrome, taken in July 1944 at a scale of 1:6000 (500 ft / inch). They show service facilities, runways, taxiways, revetments and aircraft that look like Liberators, Mitchells, Hudsons, Lightnings and DC3s.

There is also a nice oblique of Goodenough Aerodrome taken from 1500 ft, showing the facilities and the mountains in the background.

Other vertical photos show the airstrips at Dagua and Vanakanu, in New Britain that are peppered with bomb craters.

Next Month's Meeting

The next meeting of the group will be held at the Royal Aero Club at 12.00 pm on Friday September 24th. Note the earlier start time. On that occasion Skip Harvey will tell of his personal experiences while serving in the RAF, the US Army Air Corps and flying Spitfires in WWII. It should prove most interesting.

Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan