



ADF Serials Telegraph News

News for those interested in Australian Military Aircraft History and Serials

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Editor's Note:

It's been a fun time preparing this Edition, and I hope everyone appreciates the effort placed in it. I would still love others to contribute stories or story themes. In any case, I would be most willing to help write it for them or just to flesh out or research in helping their stories be told.

Message Starts:

• News Briefs

- 02/04/2011 RAAF C-17A A41-207 became the first heavy-lift aircraft to land on the new US\$28 million all-weather airstrip at Tarin Kwot, Afghanistan.
- 16/06/2011: Minister for Defence Stephen Smith and Minister for Defence Materiel Jason Clare today announced that the Australian Government had approved the acquisition of 24 MH-60R Seahawk 'Romeo' naval combat helicopters at a cost of over \$3 billion. Acquisition of 24 'Romeos' means that Navy will have the capacity to provide at least eight warships with a combat helicopter at the same time, including ANZAC Class frigates and the new Air Warfare Destroyers. The remainder will be based at HMAS *Albatross* in Nowra.



- 28/06/2011 Boeing in Long Beach, CA receives a \$195.7 million firm-fixed-price delivery order against the basic C-17 production contract, to provide 1 C-17A to Australia as a foreign military sale transaction. To be taken from USAF Contract: FA8614-06-D-2006, DO 0008: Possibly USAF Airframe#7 of 8 x FY09 C-17As due USAF acceptance 07/2011. Previous 4 RAAF C-17As were FMS also (By US Records).

- 12/07/2011 SEA KINGS worked hard during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2011 (TS11) and this will be the aircrafts last major exercise before they face retirement after a career of 35 years. The three Sea Kings were flown overland from HMAS Albatross to the exercise area at Shoalwater Bay in seven and a half hours.
- 13/07/2011: Record Black Hawk flying hours. Minister for Defence Materiel Jason Clare today visited the Army Aviation Training Centre at Oakey in Queensland and congratulated helicopter flight and ground crews on achieving the highest annual rate of flying for Army Black Hawk helicopters since they entered service in 1988. NB: 33 still flying from 39 delivered.
- 15/07/2011: Three new Super Hornet fighters (A42-216/217/218) arrived in Australia. Six to go.
- 23/07/2011: six additional Iroquois helicopters will be reserved for sale to historical organisations.
- 28/07/2011: ALE-55 Towed Fighter Decoys for Australia's F/A-18Fs (12 Units and 72 decoys)

- **Curtiss Corner:** P-40N-15-CU A29-570 "Stormy Weather"
- **Help Desk Message Traffic Selections:** Requests and answers for information

Vale & Memorial

In memory of those actively serving and those who have in past served, and who have lost their lives. We truly appreciate the sacrifices you borne on all of our behalves.

"Lest we forget"

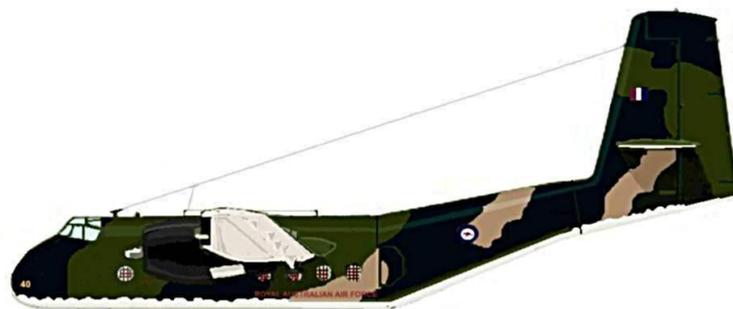
Message Board – Current topics

These boards can be accessed at: www.adf-messageboard.com.au/invboard/

Navy: Wessex Avionics Question

RAAF: RAAF F-111 retirement

Army: Where are the Huey's?



Stories:

- **The Interim Strike/Reconnaissance Force; F-111C cancellation and Options 1969-1973 by Editor**
- **The Churchill Wing Offensive Operations Chapter 2 by Editor**



The Interim Strike/Reconnaissance Force; F-111C cancellation and Options 1969-1973

Programme Background:

The first test F-111A (FY#63-9766) rolled out of the General Dynamics Fort Worth, Texas plant on October 15, 1964, 37 months after the OSD go-ahead decision, 22 months after the program's actual beginning, and two weeks ahead of schedule. It was powered by YTF30-P-1 turbofans. Pending the availability of the escape capsule, it was fitted with a pair of conventional ejector seats.

F-111A 63-9766 took off on its maiden flight from Carswell AFB, Texas on December 21, 1964. Test Pilots Dick Johnson and Val Prahl were at the controls. Although the flight was shortened to 22 minutes because of a flap malfunction, the results were generally satisfactory. The first F-111A deliveries took place on the 18th July 1967 to the 428th, 492th and 430th Tactical Fighter Squadrons of the 474th Tactical Fighter Wing based at Cannon AFB in New Mexico. In early 1968, this Wing transferred to Nellis AFB.

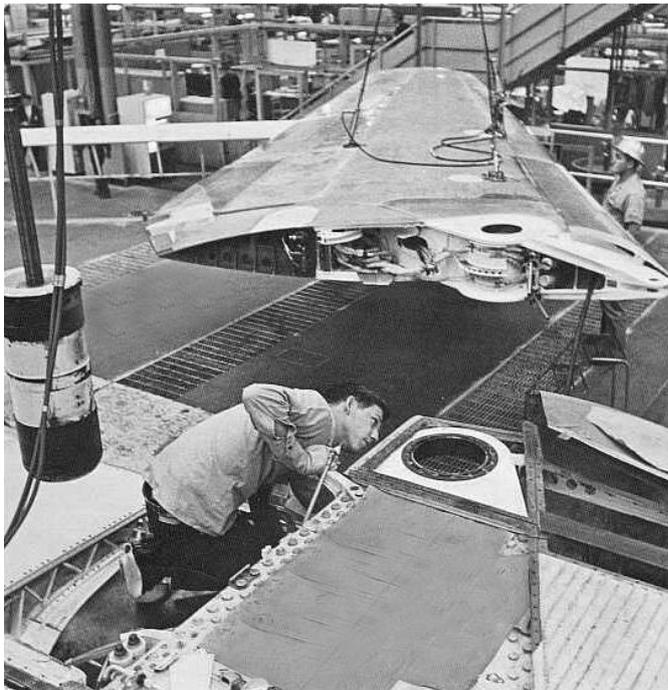
Based on the results of the Combat Bullseye I tests of the spring of 1967, the Air Force decided to rush a small detachment of F-111As to Southeast Asia under a program known as Combat Lancer. This program was preceded by the Harvest Reaper program of June 1967 which was intended to identify known F-111A shortcomings and to prepare the aircraft for combat. It was anticipated that the Harvest Reaper modifications would enter the F-111A production lines if they were successfully proven in combat.

Six 428th TFS F-111As were allocated to the Combat Lancer program, and departed Nellis AFB for Thailand on March 15, 1968. By the end of that month, 55 night missions had been flown against targets in North Vietnam, but two aircraft had been lost. Replacement aircraft had left Nellis, but the loss of a third F-111A on April 22 halted F-111A combat operations. The USAF later discovered (as a later returning prisoner of war would confirm) that a tailplane problem could cause a sudden and uncontrollable pitch-up and roll. This failure in the flying controls system caused the aircraft to break up in flight. The other two crashes in Vietnam were traced to poor mounting of the M61A1 cannon and to pilot error.

These losses caused controversy in the USA with the aircraft became known as "*McNamara's Flying Edsel*", and was accused of being a potential "technological gold mine for the Reds". However, the Air Force and General Dynamics remained hard at work trying to fix the

problems with the F-111A. The 428th TFS of the 474th TFW reached an initial operational capability in the spring of 1968. Harvest Reaper modifications validated by the Combat Lancer operations followed shortly thereafter.

F-111 testing and training incidents (including two crashes in early 1968) had dictated a detailed and involved investigation. On August 27, 1969, a wing-carry-through-box failed during a ground fatigue test. This failure was traced to the manufacturers of the box, which had been paying off inspectors for approving unauthorized welding. Extensive retrofits were required because most F-111As had already cleared the production lines.



The troubled wing box

The US Air Force lost its 15th F-111A on 22nd December 1969, due to failure of the forged wing pivot fitting. All F-111As were grounded the next day, and until issues were sorted out, all F-111s would not fly again, until the 31st July 1970.

The Australian Response to the technical risks: 1964

Ever since signing up to the F-111A Programme in 1963, the Australian Government, with weary eyes focused to our northwest, specifically the Indonesians, in the 60's, had felt that there was a need for consideration given for a interim service aircraft to replace the GAF Canberra Bombers of 1, 2 and 6 Squadrons.

Cabinet Submission No 59 of 1964 dated the 1st May 1964 (further to No 41 17th March 1946) regarding a examination of a interim Strike/Reconnaissance aircraft for the RAAF until the delivery of the twenty-four RAAF F-111As ordered , in July 1967. There was an option at that time, as recommended by the CAS, to take up a delayed delivery extension to accept deliveries between July and September 1968 after the USAF F-111As had been in squadron service for more than a year. This would show up any problems in the aircraft and assist the RAAF to become operational on, this now a tried aircraft by 1970.

The Chief of Air Staff (A/M Sir Valston Hancock) recommended that the US Government should be approached quickly for twenty-four F-4C Phantoms on long term purchase after

having rejected the previous offered twelve aircraft RB/B-47E lease (Submission No36/1964).

However given the current opposing Indonesian force structure in the northwest and the remaining Canberra airframe hours left, it was decided that the interim Strike and Reconnaissance aircraft would not be required, providing the F-111As arrive by mid 1970. On the negative side, no single Canberra Bomber could attack any worthwhile targets “northwest” from the Australian Mainland due to range limitations, thus negating the RAAF of a weapons platform that could strike worthwhile targets at long range for some perceived six years hence.

In April 1966, with refined operational requirements, the configuration of Australia's F-111As was changed, and instead of receiving standard F-111As, it was decided that the RAAF would receive an F-111A-based hybrid (designated F-111C), incorporating the longer span wings and strengthened undercarriage of the new Strategic Air Command FB-111A variant, but without that version's advanced avionics and engines.

Delays also to the USAF's RF-111 programme (and subsequent cancellation) began to have an effect on the original Australian F-111 programme in 1966. Originally there were to be twenty-four F-111C Strike versions, with an option to acquire another six RF-111A aircraft. Options included not taking up the additional six RF airframes, but modifying six of the original after returning these to General Dynamics for retrofit in about 1970.

Australia's eventual preferred option, with increasing costs and a rising tide of political, press and public opposition to the aircraft's procurement, would be to wait until 1974. The RAAF awarded General Dynamics a feasibility study contract on 31st December, 1974, to look at the practicality and cost of converting four F-111Cs to RF-111C configuration. One served as the prototype and was flown to Fort Worth for conversion in October 1978. The three remaining designated RF-111Cs were converted at Amberley.

GD Piglet to RAAF Pig

The first F-111C was officially handed over at Fort Worth on 4th September, 1968 (having flown earlier in July), but within three weeks of this ceremonial hand-over it had been decided to delay deliveries, pending modifications. This halt was prompted by the F-111's eleventh USAF accident, at Nellis AFB, in which an *RAAF Navigator*, under training, was part of the crew. The incident led to major repairs to the wing boxes of all F-111s, but even before these could be completed, fatigue cracking in the same area forced further modifications.

The completed RAAF F-111Cs went into storage. There were calls to have the F-111C aircraft programme cancelled and that F-4Es to be purchased in their place. But on the 17th October 1969, Prime Minister John Gorton refuted the speculation by rejecting any consideration to acquire F-4E Phantoms instead of the F-111Cs. In November 1969, the then Australian Defence Minister had asked the USAF to reactivate the stored F-111Cs for early delivery.

Unfortunately this coincided a month later with the US Air Force losing its 15th F-111A on the 22nd December 1969, due to failure of the forged wing pivot fitting. All F-111As were grounded the next day. *The grounding was only lifted on the 31st July 1970.*



The last F-111C A8-148 when completed



The last F-111C A8-148 as shown prior to air test, with L/n 24, on the door.

This accident cast doubt on the very structural integrity of the aircraft and compounded the aircraft's modernization. Each F-111 aircraft had to be carefully checked and fixed as necessary with a new method of non-destructive cold testing.

By February 1970, GD announced that all F-111s were required to be returned to Fort Worth for crack testing (Cold Proof Load Test) and those flying would be limited to a mere 3G loading.

The RAAF F-111Cs would be dovetailed into the end of the F-111A Cold Proof Load Testing in late 1970 or early 1971, ensuring that the delivery of such would be delayed for another two years at the very minimum.

Revisiting the Options: Response to the technical risks: April 1970

The Australian Government was now in a bind as to what options it could decide on. Per Australian Government Cabinet Submission No 248 (Dated 30/04/1970), the paper set out the status of the F-111C Project and the options which were open in likelihood of an extensive delay in delivery of the F-111C aircraft. (*All F-111s had been grounded for the last seven months*). The F-111 Flight Programme had up to this date been going on for some six years, but at the earliest, it would be near the end of 1971 before Australia could be reasonably sure to be able to make a confident estimate whether the F-111C could achieve its full flight envelope, if delivered and accepted into service

There were outlined in the submission were three options:

1. Cancel the F-111C purchase within three months and do not replace it with another strike aircraft
2. Cancel the F-111C purchase within three months under buy back to the USAF and replace it with F4E Phantom aircraft plus Reconnaissance and Tanker Aircraft
3. Cancel the F-111C purchase within three months under buy back to the USAF and wait to purchase the F-111F which was built with the new wing carry-through Box

Option 1 could be considered due to the change of leadership in Indonesia at the time and the ongoing escalating cost of the Vietnam War (post 1966).

Option 2 had the underlining issues with the F-4E; was whether it was a deterrent in the form of a Strike and Reconnaissance Aircraft, though deemed as the USAF's premier Air to Air Fighter at the time. If based in Australia, unless Air to Air refuelling was provided, it could not reach the Indonesian Capital, nor identified targets on other islands. However, if based at Singapore, those targets could be reached without refuelling in the air. The force structure would be for 40 F-4E Fighter Bombers, 8 RF-4E Reconnaissance aircraft with 8 KC-135 Tankers (If the later were available). This was enough to equip two squadrons, with a third being the OCU with 36 in use and the balance of 12 as attrition and maintenance reserves. This would require that one Mirage Squadron be disbanded.



Pictured during flight in Oz, F-4E-MC-43 FY69-7215



RF-4C (Would we have received the lesser equipped RF-4E?)



Brand new on test flight, F-4E-MC-43 FY69-7214



Brand new F-4E-MC-43 FY69-7202 at the Factory, 1970

Option 3 would be politically unacceptable due to the technical risks (Not ordered or flown until post July 1970) and loss of funds expended already on the twenty-four earlier F-111C aircraft, which would result in a loss of \$150 million dollars and cost upwards of additional \$350 million dollars for the same number of replacement F-111Fs. An interim Strike Fighter Force would still be needed.

The F-111F was the final version produced for the Tactical Air Command (TAC). It first entered service with the 374th TFW based at Mountain Home AFB in Idaho in January 1972. The entire wing became operationally ready in October 1972, some eight months prior to the first RAAF F-111C delivery.

The last F-111F (of 106 F-111Fs were built) was delivered to the USAF in September 1976.

Interestingly, or by coincidence, twenty-four contracted F-111Fs were cancelled during production. (FY Serials 71-0895/0906 and 75-0210/0221)

The story ends there as we stuck with the F-111C Fleet, but,.....in a twist of fate, the F-111C AUP at the turn of the century were flying on modified salvaged F-111F wings, identified by the missing flap on the outer wing when deployed.

Authored by Gordon R Birkett 2011

The Churchill Wing Offensive Operations

Chapter 2

The Churchill Wing reaches out again

Following the success of the first offensive harassing operation by 1 Fighter Wing on the 18th April 1944 on Babar Island, it would be another quiet few months until September 1944 before they would go on the offensive once more.

However, higher level decisions were being discussed on the importance of these Island groups for future operations in defeating the Japanese

The direction of the General McArthur ground war at this stage was one of leaping, isolating, blockading and bypassing of Japanese strongholds. The decisions on what island strong holds and direction taken was made in the desire to liberate the Philippines at the earliest time.

This committed the entire allied effort to an advance along the New Guinea coast to Biak within an exceedingly narrow front, culminating on a seaborne invasion of Leyte in late 1944.

A complimentary plan was put forward (*Reno V*) to safe guard the south western Celebes area of operations and to develop another axis of approach to the Philippines.

The central thrust of *Reno V*, if it necessitated by an anticipated Japanese air and naval resistance in the Celebes and Netherlands East Indies theatre to the main Philippine landings in Luzon, was that it would include an additional allied operation. This was named *Operation JURYMAST*, the airborne invasion of the Kai-Tanimbar Island Groups.

On the 30th May 1944, General Kenney submitted plans for this airborne invasion of Selaroe Island in the Tanimbar Island Group for the building of a fighter field on Selaroe, completely air supplied for the first fourteen days, in order to explore the practicability of a follow-on airborne invasion of Mindanao. But McArthur considered that he was fully committed to the advance along the New Guinea axis, and refused to permit any diversion of the main effort. Therefore, the Kai -Tanimbar Island Groups, aside from the irregular warfare units of both Dutch Special and Australian Z Forces operations, would have to wait until September 1945 to be wrestled from the Japanese.

The second harassing operation of 1944

In the meantime, 1 Fighter Wing was involved in a period of change with two of the original Units being ordered to prepare for forward deployment to a new theatre of operations, and to introduce into Wing service at the concurrent time, the Spitfire Mk VIII.

Originally trialled and introduced into service by 452 Sqn RAAF from January 1944 when S/Ldr Lou Spence flew the first MkVIII in, the type would experience several unforeseen problems that would delay its introduction into squadron service by the three original 1st Fighter Wing units. These would range from fuel pressure unit failures, oil system leaks and cooling pipe corrosion.

The later required the local Australian manufacture of new pipes to a higher and thicker standard and their replacement on most MKVIII aircraft held.



A close up of TS-V A58-482 in flight, though it appears that this aircraft is still carrying her original RAF Serial of JG655 as well as her smaller A58-serial in the Northern Territory when delivered to 548Sqn RAF in August 1944. It was sent to 7RSU, located at Darwin Civil on the 9th September 1944 to be re-camouflaged in Forest Green. Later in December, 1944, this aircraft and Wg Commander Jeffrey's A58-431 were involved in trials of fitting four 20mm cannons in lieu of the standard armament of two 20mm cannons and four Browning .303 machineguns. Coded as TS-M in September 1944, it became the personal aircraft of Sqn Ldr E D Glaser DFC who had it re-coded back to TS-V once again in December 1944.

Due to these teething issues, 452 Sqn RAAF and 457 Sqn RAAF would continue to fly the MkV version until mid July 1944. Two new Spitfire MkVIII squadrons had also arrived in mid June 1944; 548 Sqn RAF and 549 Sqn RAF, at Livingstone and Strauss respectively in their distinctive finish.

These Spitfires differed from the others sent direct to 1 Fighter Wing in that having all of their camouflage stripped and removed at 3AD Amberley when delivered to Strathpine earlier in 1944.



Formation photo of Spitfire Mk VIII's of 548Sqn RAF in August 1944.

By the end of 1944, all of the operational *paint stripped* Spitfires would be repainted in camouflage as ordered by the Northern Command AOC due to them “sticking out like a sore thumb” on the ground.

Not all operational natural metal Spitfires were painted as evidenced by photos taken when ex Prime Minister William “Billy” Hughes MHR visited 1 Wing in November 1944 as per below:



For the next six months, the number of Spitfire MkVIII Squadrons defending the Darwin Area and surrounds was numbered at five; with nearly 150 Spitfire MkVIII's being available on squadron strength or in reserve pools, following the rectification of the initial aircraft problems by August 1944.

By now, the five Squadrons had been split into two wings; 1 Fighter Wing consisting of all three RAF Squadrons; 54, 548 and 549 Sqns RAF, and 80 Fighter Wing consisting of 452 and 457 Sqns RAAF, with 79 Sqn RAAF yet to be united with them. Day in and day out over the first few months of the two new units stay, there had been a routine of being on readiness against an enemy who never pay a visit.



Spitfire MkVIII A58-379 still in natural metal as it appears it was still in this scheme during the first raid. This aircraft was only camouflaged in Forrest Green by 7RSU in November 1944 per the Unit's records

With a reaction to inaction, the Commanding Officer of 548 Sqn RAF and the other Squadron Commanding Officers in the Wing approached commanding officer of the Wing, Group Captain Jeffrey, to *"put us in the way of some operations, so as to prevent the black dog from leaping on our backs, as the Irish say"* as S/Ldr Watts commented.

On the 3rd September, 1944, Wing summoned all three RAF Squadron Commanding Officers and their Squadron Intelligence Officers for a conference whereupon Group Captain Jeffrey and F/Lt S Collie (the Wing Intelligence Officer) showed a sand model, photographs and maps of Selaroe Island in the Tanimbar Island Group.

The target site, some 300 miles to the north of Darwin, consisted of a heavily camouflaged and concealed camp area at Lingat Bay, with an enemy grass air strip located some three to four miles away at Selaroe.

Previously two 31 Sqn RAAF Beaufighters, during October 1943, had been successful in claiming two aircraft kills (Sqn Ldr Gordon) with one probable (F/O Chord) in the area when the Japanese Lilly Bombers were using the strip regularly. Several others were strafed on the ground.

Over flights and follow up missions by Allied bombers and 31 Sqn RAAF Beaufighters had reduced the number of Japanese Bombers that had frequented this strip for most of 1944. By all accounts to the Officers present, it was considered as a poor target indeed, with limited clarity of targets except for one heavy and several light Anti Aircraft weapons, as evident in all of the photos. There was a native village but that was out of bounds for the proposed mission as they were to be considered as friendly. A Japanese Radar Station

further to the south was also considered “taboo” for it was safer to leave it alone and know where it was, rather than forcing them to re-locate after strafing.



A still taken of a 31 Sqn Beaufighter strafing a Japanese Lily Bomber on Selaroe Island Strip in November 1943. Notice the ground crews scattering. RAAF Official.

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We’re on our way

At 09.00hrs the flights had their briefing, meteorology forecast, along with call signs allocations. 548 Sqn flight was called Blue Section, with 549 Sqn RAF and 54Sqn RAF called Yellow and Red Flights respectively. The leading 2 Sqn RAAF B-25 and Wing flight were called Tom Flight. An escape wallet was issued to all crew members and pilots containing Dutch Guilders, Malay and totem glossaries and a letter of introduction to the Koepala Kampong (Village Headman) should they be shot down or forced landed in enemy territory.

A 43Sqn RAAF ASR Catalina, under command of F/O Wiseman, would be on standby nearby the target for any ditching aircraft, should it be needed.

Take-off was between 10.50 and 10.55hrs and all Spitfire flights rendezvoused over Darwin at 11.10hrs whereupon they fell in behind the heavily laden B-25 (loaded with 4000lbs of incendiaries bombs) to begin a slow southern approach towards Selaroe Island, some 286 miles away.

Slipper tanks, being in short supply, were not to be jettisoned, unless in an extreme emergency or direct contact with enemy aircraft. Before arriving at the island, one Spitfire pilot would jettison his tank before the attack, by accident or in disregard of this order.

Raid Participants 5/09/1944

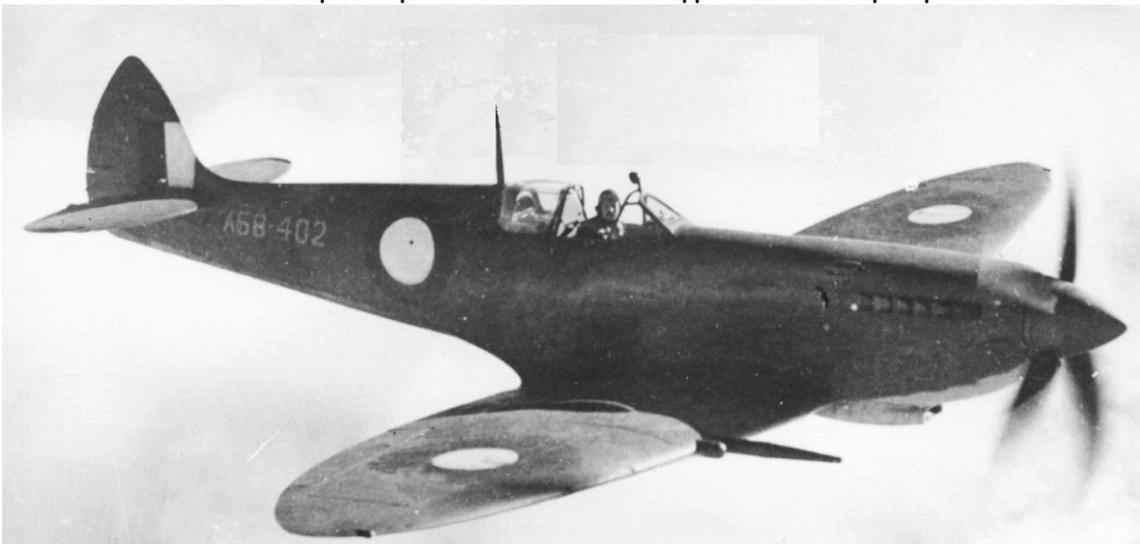
Flight#/Radio Call Sign	Pilot/Unit	Sqn Code and Aircraft Serial
Tom 1	F/O E L Ekert + 5 Crew 2Sqn(Bmbr)	KO-L/ A47-21
Tom 2	W/Cdr P Jeffrey 1Wg	A58-431
Tom 3	F/Lt Robertson 1Wg	ZF-C/A58-402
Blue 1/Ruggles 1	S/Ldr R A Watts 548Sqn RAF	TS-M/A58-482
Blue 2/Ruggles 2	F/Lt J A C Aiken 548Sqn RAF	TS-G/A58-353
Blue 3/Ruggles 3	F/Lt L Cheek 548Sqn RAF	TS-W/A58-320
Blue 4/ Ruggles 4	W/O J F Isaac 548Sqn RAF	TS-Q/A58-398
Yellow 1/Ruggles 5	S/Ldr E P W Boccock 549Sqn RAF	ZF-A/A58-341
Yellow 3/Ruggles 7	F/Lt E D Glaser 549Sqn RAF	ZF-Z/A58-379 Natural Metal
Yellow 2/Ruggles 6	F/Lt W B Van Wedd 549Sqn RAF	ZF-D/A58-335 Natural Metal
Yellow 4/ Ruggles 8	F/O G W Turner 549Sqn RAF	ZF-S/A58-348
Red 1 /Ruggles 9	S/Ldr S Linnard 54Sqn RAF	DL-M/A58-357
Red4/ Ruggles 12	W/O E Rayner 54 Sqn RAF	DL-N/A58-352
Red 2/ Ruggles 10	F/Lt F Ogden 54 Sqn RAF	DL-G/A58-479
Red 3 / Ruggles 11	F/Lt D Gossland 54Sqn RAF	DL-O/A58-349
Tom 4	W/Cdr Clive Caldwell 80Wg	QY- /A58-429
ASR/ Keepsake Z	F/O Wiseman & Crew 43Sqn RAAF	OX-T/A24-57

The navigation was good with the flights making landfall just before 1230hrs, slightly west of Selaroe Island following descending onto the deck to avoid radar contact some time earlier. They then turned to run up the eastern side of the main island ridge for their run in of the target. Radio reception of the B-25 over the island was deemed loud and distorted as they pressed their attack.

Sqn Ldr Bobock's 549 Sqn RAF Flight attacked the village at Lingat, followed by Sqn Ldr Linnard's 54 Sqn RAF Flight attacking, and then the main attack was made by the lone 2 Sqn B-25 of F/O Ekert towards the well camouflaged camp site at Linga.



Forrest Green 54 Sqn RAF Spitfire A58-352 DL-N with slipper tank fitted as per operation.



A58-402 on delivery to 549Sqn RAF where it became ZF-C.

Meanwhile 548 Sqn RAF's Sqn Ldr Watts and F/Lt Aiken strafed obscured targets around the surrounds and proceeded to follow a vehicle track towards the Village for any targets of opportunity.

After just advising that there was absolutely very little in the way of targets, Aiken's Spitfire was suddenly struck by an enemy bullet through the cockpit, exiting out of the cockpit near his left arm. The bullet had struck the radio and its electrical installation, thereby rendering it inoperative. Smoke and fire resulted for a short time, but was put out. Be it luck or fate, Aiken was the pilot who had jettisoned his tank earlier. The bullet, that passed through between frames 9 and 10, could have passed through the tank initially had it been there and would have certainly caused it to ignite, thus he was perhaps spared of that fate. With no option of continuing the operation, Aiken broke off and headed for home by himself.

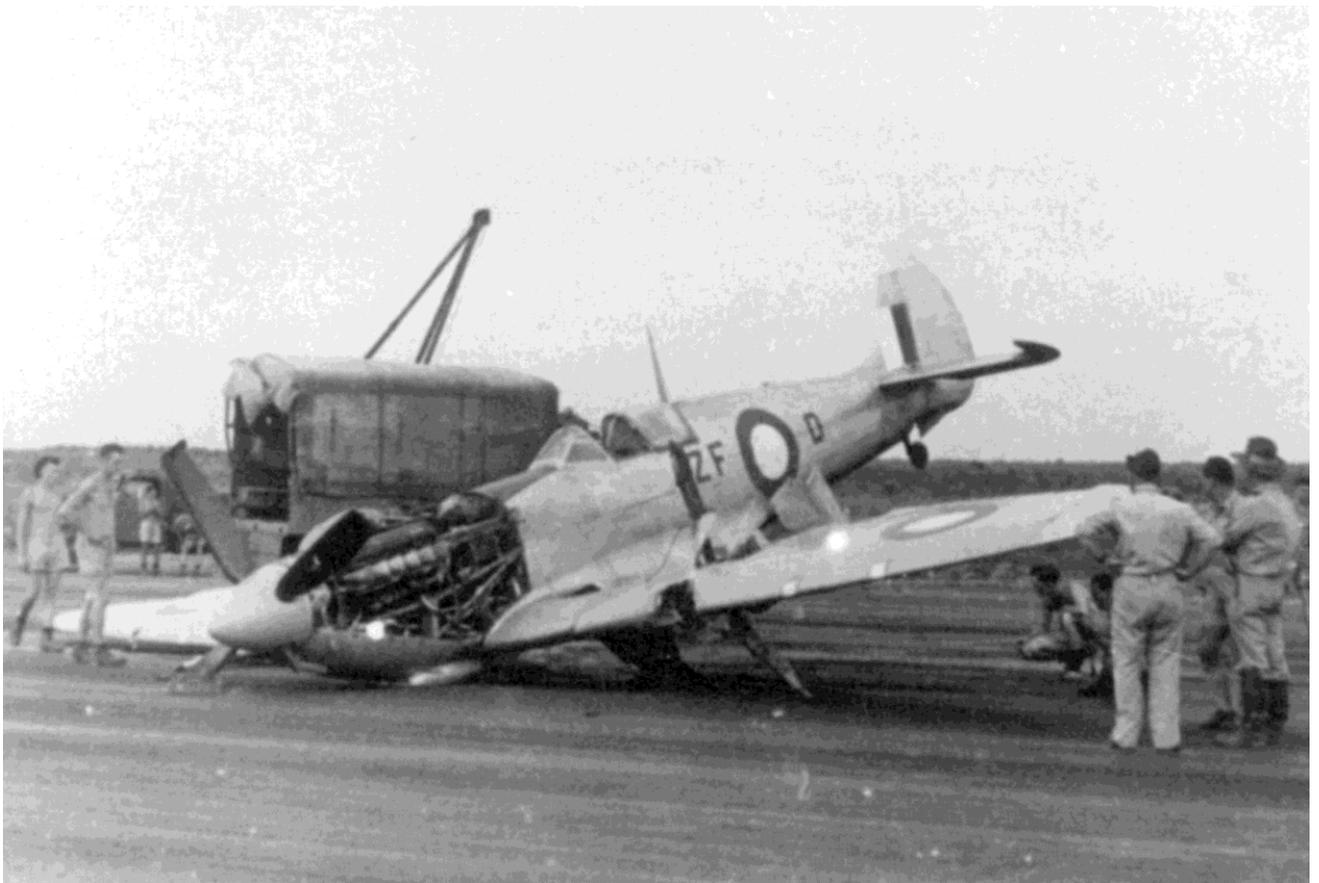
Watts at this time decided to continue to the airstrip where he observed Ekert and his crew in the B-25 being shot at with between fifteen to twenty rounds of heavy Ack Ack whilst it was on its run over the strip.

With all of its bombs dropped already, the B-25 had continued on over the strip to photograph and if the opportunity came, to strafe any Japanese aircraft that may have been there.

Once completing their individual target runs, the remaining Spitfires formed up with the B-25 and then wheeled left, flying down the western leeward side of the island range towards home.

This route was chosen due to the prevailing winds and tides should, if any aircraft received damage over the target requiring that they ditch, would ensure that they would float away from the island.

This would assist in being picked up by the standby RAAF Catalina which was stationary on the sea some 15-20 miles to the south.



Pictured here is Spitfire A58-335 ZF-D still natural metal, yellow spinner, on the 01/11/44 when it crash landed at Darwin.



Sqn Ldr E.P.Bocock, 549Sqn RAFs CO, shakes paws with his German Sheppard cross, Sally.

The Tomfoolery of Tom 4

On the outward flight a radio call was received by the B-25 from a "Tom 4" who was not present at the briefing or in the flight out it seemed.

Having gotten wind of the operation, this particular pilot thought he's join in flying his borrowed 452 Sqn RAAF Spitfire MkVIII and perhaps participate in the attack on Selaroe Island also. He wanted to join up with the formation, but was delayed in his take-off by an engine problem for some twelve minutes. He conducted his own rhubarb mission nearby.

It is not known whether he did join the formation on its return on the flight back but Records seem to support the fact that he didn't. Due to a navigation or compass error, this 80 Wg Officer flew singularly nearly twenty degrees off track northwards and ended up over Babar Island, whereupon he attacked targets of opportunity on Babar Island (548Sqn RAF Report).

That was the un-official truth whereas the supporting 452Sqn RAAF Records has him suffering engine troubles, thus being unable to catch up and make contact with the mission formation; he decided to continue on to conduct an uneventful three and a half hour sweep of his own in and around the Tanimbar Islands before returning to Darwin solo.

Irrespective of views, be it foolish or very brave, it must be deemed as one of the longest solo single engine sorties made by a RAAF Pilot over water in the Pacific War. That pilot of Tom 4? It was Group Captain Clive Caldwell DSO DFC and Bar, Polish Cross of Valour and CO of 80 Wg.

On their return

Every aircraft returned safely to their respective bases by 14.15hrs, with F/Lt Aiken and his damaged Spitfire being actually the first to land. Later that evening all pilots attended a camera gun film night and discussed the operation over at 54 Sqn RAF. The 548Sqn RAF Films were finally judged as the best shots.

Authored Gordon R Birkett @2010

Next: in Chapter3, the November 1944 Raid

Awe Nice shot it is: Let's put it in!



ARH Tiger A38-008 on the fly, July 2011. DOD



Curtiss Corner by Gordon Birkett



P-40N-15-CU A29-570 “Stormy Weather”

Received 2AD ex USA, FY 42-106374 and renumbered A29-570 04/11/43. Rec 5AD ex 2AD for storage 17/01/44. Rec 15ARD RP (Reserve Pool) ex ferry flight from Bankstown NSW, 13/04/44. Received 11 RSU Reserve Pool ex 15ARD (RP) 27/04/44. Received 80Sqn RAAF ex 15ARD RP 14/05/44. Rec 22RSU Detachment ex 80Sqn RAAF for engine change 12/06/44. Engine change not actioned by 22RSU. Rec 78Sqn RAAF and Coded HU-A overscored, ex 22RSU 13/06/44.

Operational Loss 1315hrs 08/08/44 when flying as part of a four aircraft flight during a barge sweep near the Maccleur Gulf area of Dutch New Guinea.

The aircraft was seen to strike the sea, near Garoewah village, some 15 miles south west of Sagan, causing the engine to smoke, followed by the aircraft crashing some 300 yards further on. It was noted that the cockpit canopy was closed on impact.

Despite the tail standing in the water, and the fuselage and wings clearly visible, no action was made by the pilot to escape.

The remaining three pilots circling for 5 minutes, left after there was no further evidence of the pilot escaping.

The Pilot; Flying Officer Gordon Horace White, Serv#406121 was stated missing, believed killed.

Several days later, the body did wash up, and in an interview of those natives post war who found the body; it was stated that they started to bury the body of the pilot, but were scared off by a Japanese patrol. The body was thought to have been left by the Japanese and then carried off again by the outgoing tide.



“Stormy Weather” fitted with drop tank and on the flight line August 1944. Pics Buz Busby

Help Desk: Ticket Requests and answers

Ticket #285

Subject	N24-006/875	Group	-	Annotate, Print
Status	Solved	Operator	Martin	
Created	07/16 13:40	Customer	Todd Glynn (toddnkaz*****)	
Solved	07/20 20:54	Access key	285Z267865915207169674	

Todd Glynn [59.101.18.224] 07/16 13:40	Dear Sir/Ma'am, I am the Flight Commander of 816 SQN Flight 1 and we have N24-006/875 allotted to us. I noted you have no imagery of 875, would you like a selection to enhance your website?. Thanks in advance. Todd Glynn LCDR, RAN
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Martin Edwards (Beech 1900, Canberra, CT4, Sabre, Vampire) (Martin) [203.206.204.80] 07/16 15:19	Hi Todd, We would welcome any photos of this or any other aircraft that you can provide. You may send them to me at martin.edwards@adf-serials.com.au please indicate how you would like them credited. Thank you Martin
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Martin Edwards (Beech 1900, Canberra, CT4, Sabre, Vampire) (Martin) [203.206.204.80] 07/20 20:54	Photos and information added Thank you
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Ticket #286

Subject	PC-9A tail markings	Group	-	Annotate, Print
Status	Solved	Operator	Martin	
Created	07/18 09:32	Customer	Barry Magann (angry.kid@*****)	
Solved	07/20 20:51	Access key	286Z895815673618607491	

Barry Magann [124.180.115.56] 07/18 09:32	Hi guys was wondering if you could help me please? Im looking at the Tail markings on the early RAAF PC-9 paint sceems in orange and white. And cant identify the letters maked near the rudder. Some have just PC-9 other have some letters along side the PC9A you wouldnt happen to know what those letters are by chance? KM?? MN?? Well hope to hear form you soon regards Baz
---	--

Martin Edwards (Beech 1900, Canberra, CT4, Sabre, Vampire) (Martin)	Hi Barry, The script reads "HDH PC9A" referring to a Hawker De Havilland built aircraft Regards martin
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Ticket #289

Annotate, Print

Subject	Vampire A79-666	Group	-
Status	Solved	Operator	Martin
Created	07/18 21:41	Customer	Paul Cuttell (pcktel@*****)
Solved	07/24 17:55	Access key	289Z217898002805489148

Paul Cuttell
[123.211.192.31]
07/18 21:41

Hi,

This aircraft is now at Townsville RAAF museum being restored to static display condition.

Cheers.

Martin Edwards
(Beech 1900,
Canberra, CT4,
Sabre, Vampire)
(Martin)
[203.206.204.80]
07/20 20:54

Hi Paul
That is great news.
Quite a nice little collection forming at Townsville.
Any chance of some photos?
If so please send to martin.edwards@adf-serials.com.au
Regards
Martin

Martin Edwards
(Beech 1900,
Canberra, CT4,
Sabre, Vampire)
(Martin)
[203.206.204.80]
07/24 17:55

Info added to Vampire page
www.adf-serials.com/2a79.shtml

Ticket #290

Annotate, Print

Status	Pending
Subject	DH-84 Dragon A34-59, later VH-AQU
Group	-
Created	07/24 23:01

Alan Macdonald
[124.177.173.46]
07/24 23:01

Hi Guys, to whoever may want to update the info for the above. It further became VH-DHX and was later rebuilt (for whatever cause I don't know), apparently partly in Australia then exported to the UK and restoration completed there where it became G-ECAN and as at the beginning of July 2011 was still flying.

Regards

Ticket #292

Annotate, Print

Subject	Douglas Db-7B and A-20A	Group	-
Status	Responded	Operator	Gordy
Created	08/02 03:50	Customer	Wilko Jonker (ttx@adf-serials.com.au)
Solved	-	Access key	292Z1385189354022579195

Wilko Jonker
[83.82.203.193]
08/02 03:50

Hello,
via a fellow modeller of mine i was attended on your interesting website.
I have some questions about the Douglas DB-7B Bostons and A-20As
As far as i know at the beginning of World War II the Dutch navy orderd some DB-7C Bostons with torpedo launching capabilities.
Due to the fast Japanese progress a emergency delivery of RAF DB-7Bs was sent to the Dutch East Indies, were just six aircraft arrived and one was completed and flown away from the harbour.Is something known about this particular aircraft??
The rest of the aircraft were delivered in Australia and probably entered RAAF-service or were (some of) these send to the RAF??
On yoursite I have found several DB-7Bs with,what I think RAF-serials. Some of them are marked as "ex-Dutch" aircraft.

Another question is about the statement applied with some are aircraft in the listing, that these were intially no 18 squadron NEIAF aircraft.
As far as I know these aircraft were in RAAF-service in june 1942, when about 14 A-20As originating from USAAC were delivered tot no 18 squadron NEIAF (and returned to USAAC after about two weeks.
Check my website at

I hope you can provide me with the information.
thank you very much.

with regards,

Wilko Jonker
The Netherlands

Gordon Birkett
(Dakota, Hudson,
Spitfire,
Vengeance,
Wirraway) (Gordy)
[114.77.243.240]
16:24

Hi Wilko

22 DB-7Bs were transferred ex NEI Refugee Cargo April 1942
They are per the stated RAF Serials (Being transferred or diverted ex RAF) on the 2A28 Serial page

They are a mix of Boeing built and Douglas Built DB-7Bs

Six Aircraft were said to be landed in Java, with one or two captured by the Japanese and made flyable.

An actual total of only 32 were transferred, 21 Douglas and 11 Boeing.With 2 W/o before acceptance.

Those that landed in Oz
ADF.Serial A/C.Type USAAF/RAF

A28-1 DB-7B/Boston Mk.III (Douglas-Santa Monica Built) AL890
A28-2 DB-7B/Boston Mk.IIIA (Boeing Built) AL347
A28-3 DB-7B/Boston Mk.III (Douglas-Santa Monica Built) AL887
A28-4 DB-7B/Boston Mk.III (Douglas-Santa Monica Built) AL893
A28-5 DB-7A AL895
A28-6 DB-7B/Boston Mk.III (Douglas-Santa Monica Built) AL897
A28-7 DB-7B/Boston Mk.III (Douglas-Santa Monica Built) AL899
A28-8 DB-7B/Boston Mk.III (Douglas-Santa Monica Built) AL907
A28-9 DB-7B/Boston Mk.III (Douglas-Santa Monica Built) AL891
A28-10 DB-7B/Boston Mk.IIIA (Boeing Built) AL358
A28-11 DB-7B/Boston Mk.IIIA (Boeing Built) AL364
A28-12 DB-7B/Boston Mk.IIIA (Boeing Built) AL365
A28-13 DB-7B/Boston Mk.IIIA (Boeing Built) AL367
A28-14 DB-7B/Boston Mk.III (Douglas-Santa Monica Built) AL892
A28-15 DB-7B/Boston Mk.IIIA (Boeing Built) AL361
A28-16 DB-7B/Boston Mk.IIIA (Boeing Built) AL362
A28-17 DB-7B/Boston Mk.III (Douglas-Santa Monica Built) AL363
A28-18 DB-7B/Boston Mk.IIIA (Boeing Built) AL366
A28-19 DB-7B/Boston Mk.IIIA (Boeing Built) AL368
A28-20 DB-7B/Boston Mk.IIIA (Boeing Built) AL369
A28-21 DB-7B/Boston Mk.III (Douglas-Santa Monica Built) AL894
A28-22 DB-7B/Boston Mk.IIIA (Boeing Built) AL898

NB:A28-9 is ex MLD #D66 and A28-5 is ex MLD #D70

All 22 carried MLD "Kongsmarine" (pardon my spelling) forward of cockpit and were in standard RAF 1940 temperate finish

The first six aircraft arrived on 27 February 1942 in the port of Tjilatjap on the MS Kota Baroe. Their MLD serials are assumed to have been from D-47 to D-79+. One was assembled and flown to Tasikmalaja on 5 March 1942 (the main road behind the port facilities at Tjilatjap had been widened to serve as a runway). It is presumed the aircraft was rendered inoperable during the surrender.

The others remained in Tjilatjap where they were destroyed by a bombardment.

From the salvaged parts the Japanese constructed one or two flyable aircraft and one of them was flown in Japan with serial J-D-A-1.

At the time another 22 DB-7Bs were on their way to Java on the Mapia (6), Tabinta (3), Tarakan (5), Tossair (3) and Weltevreden (5) but were diverted to Australia where they arrived in March and April 1942.

As the aircraft concerned were originally part of an RAF order, they had been given British serials.

Subsequently they were transferred to the RAAF with serials A28-1 to A28-22. With 22Sqn only 12 aircraft were initially accepted per the Unit's In use Equipment: IE

Agreed, a number of these (viz. A28-4, -5, -8, -9, -11, -12, -15, -16, -18 and -22) were actually first delivered to the 18th (NEI) Squadron (ie the ML-KNIL)

Along with these, several (4 only, not 14) USAAF A-20s were also transferred to 18 Sqn NEI. But it was decided to standardise on B-25. All other types returned

by July 1942.

NB: 4 A-20s by my count, served with the 18th NEI: A-20's FY40-077 (#45, Named "Baby Dumpling"/"War Bond Special", which later came to the RAAF as A28-36 in 1943) FY40-101 (#22), FY40-82 (#15) and FY40-155, of which all went onto 89thBS(Lt) The IE of the 89thBS was 15 Aircraft.

Some Actual Production notes:

#1

Boeing-240 ac, contract F-672 for DB73s* (ordered 18 May 1940 by the French Purchasing Comm.) but production switched to the DB-7B Boston III model when taken over by GB, serials: AL263-336-502 of which 165 were diverted US (apart from ac shipped to USSR and NEI MLD).

*Douglas DB-73 was basically the French equivalent of the DB-7B that was ordered by the Royal Air Force. It was basically similar to the DB-7B for the RAF, but differed primarily in being fitted with French equipment and instruments. 480 DB-73s were ordered by France on May 18, 1940, but none had been delivered by the time that France fell. Consequently, all the DB-73s ordered were completed to DB-7B standards following the French capitulation and were delivered to Britain as Boston IIIs. Power was provided by two 1600 hp Wright R-2600-A5B radials. Total fuel capacity was increased from 205 US gallons to 394 gallons in order to improve the range so that the aircraft could operate against targets in occupied Europe.

#2

Douglas-240 ac, contract F-719 for DB73s (also ordered 18 May 1940) but switched to DB-7B Boston IIIs when taken over by GB, serials: AL668-907 of which 75 diverted US (apart from ac shipped to USSR, NEI MLD and MAAF).

#3

According to Air Britain's Aero Militaria these were AL722, 808, 821, 833-870, 872-879, 881 and AL883-907, 75 ac in all, of which 32 were diverted later in Dec 1941 to the Netherlands East Indies (6 reached the Indies, 22 went to the RAAF as refugee cargo and four were returned to the USAAF around June 1942).

#4

I have researched the construction numbers for these Boeing and Douglas built DB-7Bs, and passed along to Pete Boer

Example:

>>> 3823 DB-7B/Boston Mk.IIIA AL891 D-66

>>> 3827 DB-7B/Boston Mk.IIIA AL895 D-70

>>> 2743 DB-7B/Boston Mk.IIIA AL362 D-50

Guess that's enough to spike the fever for now

Best
Gordy

Gordon R Birkett

Gongs and Praise for Period

- NZ-serials have been revived and with the help of Les Billcliff and Tony McDonald; updates are starting and images and links added.
 - Martin Edwards has also started a NZ images gallery so any pictures of NZ aircraft would be uploaded and any additional contributions would be most welcome. Martin is also single handed in updating details as they are sent in.
-

Gordy

Any contributing Articles would be most welcome, along with pics for the next issue;
Summer 2011 due by October 2011

