



ADF Serials Telegraph News

News for those interested in Australian Military Aircraft History and Serials

Volume 5: Issue 2: Winter 2015 Editor and contributing Author: Gordon R Birkett

Message Starts:

In this issue:

- **News Briefs** by Gordon Birkett @2015
- **Story: Dassault Etendard IV:** Almost in RANFAA Service. Gordon Birkett @2015
- **Story: "Morituri vos salutantus!"; No 24 Squadron RAAF forming and its Defence of Rabaul: Part 2** by Gordon Birkett @2015
- **Odd Shots: 60's to infinity**
- **Message Traffic Selections:** Please address any questions to: question@adf-serials.com.au in the meantime

Message Board – Current hot topics:

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

News Briefs

28th April 2015: The Government of Australia has requested a possible sale of follow-on sustainment support and services in support of three (3) Hobart Class Destroyers. The sustainment efforts will include AEGIS computer software and hardware updates, system integration and testing, tools and test equipment, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical documentation, personnel training and training equipment, aircrew trainer devices upgrades, U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance, and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated cost is \$275 million

28th April 2015: The Government of Australia has requested a possible sale of follow-on sustainment support and services for twenty four (24) AF/A-18Fs Super Hornet and twelve (12) AEA-18G Growler aircraft. The sustainment efforts will include software and hardware updates, Engineering Change Proposals, System Configuration upgrades, system integration and testing, engine component improvement, tools and test equipment, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical documentation, personnel training and training equipment, aircrew trainer devices upgrades, U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance, and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated cost is \$1.5 billion.

5th May 2015: A fourth Navantia's Juan Carlos I Class LHD/ CVE ship has been ordered. Turkey has been looking for a new amphibious assault ship for some time. The competition for an "LPD" began in 2010, and bids were requested in 2011, but it took until December 2013 for the SSM procurement agency to decide. In December 2013, Turkey's SSM procurement agency announced that the Defence Industry Executive Committee had directed them to begin contract negotiations with SEDEF Gemi Insaati AS, which is partnered with Navantia to offer the BPE/ Juan Carlos I Class design.

A Decision and contract was signed in May 2015. The LPD is planned to be delivered to the Turkish navy in 2021. This ship is designed to accommodate 1,450 persons and could sail for 50 days without resupply at 22-knot speed. The LPD, when needed, will be used for natural disaster relief with its fully equipped 34-bed hospital. The LPD, which will displace 27,436 tons fully laden with a length of 231 meters (757 feet), is the biggest naval platform of the Turkish navy.

At the request of the navy command, a ski jump will be installed on the LPD. *This will enable Turkey to acquire 15 F-35B (short takeoff, vertical landing) aircraft as part of 100 F-35s it plans to purchase.* Although Turkish news media has been describing the LPD as an aircraft carrier, experts say it will have facilities and capabilities beyond those of a carrier. Expert Devrim Yaylali, who knows the Turkish navy well, told Al-Monitor that this platform, although it will not carry as many planes as a regular aircraft carrier, will nevertheless have its own fighter plane component. Turkey will become the 3rd operator of this ship type, after Spain and Australia.

5th May 2015: Australia commissioned their first two Boeing CH-47F Chinook advanced configuration aircraft. **A15-301** and **A15-302** were accepted into C Sqn, 5th Aviation Regiment. Five additional CH-47F helicopters will be delivered by August 2015 to eventually replace the existing fleet of CH-47D Chinooks and Boeing Defence Australia will provide delivery and on-site maintenance support for the aircraft. Earlier retirements have seen CH-47D+ A15-106 to Point Cook and soon, CH-47D+ A15-201 will be delivered to the AWM.



Yet un-delivered (As of this issue)CH-47F A15-304 during a test flight in the USA earlier this year. Credit Boeing.

23rd May 2015: The first of three ships being built as part of the Federal Government's Air Warfare Destroyer (AWD) program, the HMAS Hobart, has been launched, with thousands of workers attending the milestone event at Techport in Adelaide. As it is only 75% complete, the ship will not be ready for sea trials until 2016.

4th June 2015: Lead items for the second low-rate initial production lot 10 (LRIP-10) in mid-2015 have been approved. These deliver in LRIP-10 [eight aircraft for delivery in 2018] and LRIP-11 [four aircraft for delivery in 2019 to the RAAF(A35-003 to A35-010/A35-011 to A35-014)



HMAS Hobart 23rd May 2015, on the sea lift. Credit:www.ausawd.com

22nd June 2015: The State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to Australia for AGM-88B High Speed Anti-Radiation Missiles and associated equipment, parts and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$69 million. The Government of Australia has requested possible sale of up to fourteen (14) AGM-88B High Speed Anti-Radiation Missiles (**HARM**) Tactical Missiles, sixteen (16) AGM-88E Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missiles (**AARGM**) Tactical Missiles, four (4) CATM-88B Captive Air Training Missiles, eight (8) CATM-88E Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missiles (AARGM) Captive Air Training Missiles, six (6) AARGM Guidance Sections, five (5) AARGM Control Sections, and two (2) AARGM Tactical Telemetry Missiles (for live fire testing), containers, spares and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical documentation, personnel training and training equipment, U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistics support services, and other elements of logistics and program support.



The newest upgrade, the AGM-88E Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile (AARGM), features the latest software, enhanced capabilities intended to counter radar shutdown and passive radar using an additional active millimetre wave seeker.

25th June 2015: David Inskip advises that the RAAF's first C27-J **A34-001** landed at Richmond AFB, 1520Hrs.

25th June 2015: Just *one whitetail C-17A left* at the Boeing Sales Lot, after QATAR ordered 4. **Why not become the third largest operator with 9**, if only to beat the English and QATARians who have now 8 each. BTW;RNZAF have missed the boat on getting 2, if they were ever serious. Bring on **A41-214!**



Story: Dassault Etendard IV: Almost in RANFAA Service.

The Dassault Etendard IV was a supersonic carrier-borne strike fighter aircraft, produced in two versions (Etendard IVM Maritime strike fighter and the Etendard IVP Photo reconnaissance aircraft for the French Navy) which entered service with the French Navy in 1962 and were eventually retired in 1991. A total of ninety were built.



The Etendard's history began with two different design requirements in the early 1950s for light fighters, one for the French Air Force and the other for NATO air forces.

The Etendard was a naval light attack fighter, which in service was often recognized for its popularity with its pilots due to its manoeuvrability.

It had a highly swept foldable wing, which featured double-slotted flaps and spoilers, as well as powered ailerons and leading-edge droop flaps. It was powered by the SNECMA Atar engine, which had also powered the French Air Force's Dassault Mirage III, the configuration was broadly similar with the exception of the removed afterburner. The Étendard was capable of transonic speeds, being only able to exceed the speed of sound when in a dive.

It could be furnished with various equipment to carry out its mission roles, which included attack, photo-reconnaissance, and aerial refuelling tanking.

In addition to the commonly fitted 30mm DEFA cannon, various armaments and munitions could be carried on the four wing hard points, such as Nord 5103 air-to-air missiles, rocket pods, bombs, and drop tanks. A retractable nose-mounted refuelling probe was also fitted. Other optional equipment included a Tacan receiver and a braking parachute for land operations. A compact Dassault Aida radar was installed in the nose, along with a small infrared sensor for guiding munitions.

The 1959 RAN brush

In the late 1950's, the DH Sea Venom, the RANFAA's first jet fighter, was already considered insufficient to perform its role in the defence of the fleet. Consideration was being formulated to replace the type with a more modern jet aircraft type.

At the time the RANFAA had two carriers in service, one with a straight deck fitted with a BH3(19) catapult* suitable for piston aircraft and another one, fitted with a modernised angle deck with a steam catapult that was suitable for jet aircraft operations. **The BH3(19) catapult fitted on HMAS Sydney could launch an aircraft weighing between 15500lbs to 20000lbs maximum at between 73 knots and 66 knots respectively, over the bow.*

Earlier studies and considerations of fitting a stronger steam catapult for HMAS Sydney in 1953 so that it could launch and recover the Fairey Gannet Anti Submarine Aircraft, was shelved due to funding and delivery issues. The operational rationale of having two carriers that could carry Gannets would have been a benefit in time of war. *With one Steam Catapult already ordered for HMAS Melbourne, it would be mid 1955 before another would have been available to be installed.*

Forward to February 1959, the RAN was seeking to replace the Sea Venom, and was pleasantly invited by French officials to view and test a Dassault Etendard Prototype, then undergoing carrier and landing testing under the auspices of RAE Bedford and Farnborough, in the UK.

At the time, the RANFAA had no test pilots, but consideration was given that a highly experienced Jet pilot would suffice since all of the testing and air data had or will be collected by the time a evaluation flight was performed by a RANFAA Pilot.

Discussions were held on a suitable qualified pilot, with a decision of which one of two experienced Jet Pilot Officers, both ranked as Lt Cdrs were to be made, with the choice on falling on Lt Cdr Cordell.

The catapult and landing speed performance of the Etendard was promising by midyear, with the Company Officials stating that a reduction of some 10 knots was possible with the application of wing modifications and boundary layer blowing of the leading edge and flaps.

This was a important issue when considering that the RAN's Majestic Class Carrier was smaller when compared with the two new Clemenceau Class Carriers that were to be equipped with this type.

It must be pointed out, at this time, the French Navy had in service a half sister Majestic Class Ship of HMAS Melbourne, the Colossus class FNS Arromanches which was similar. In 1957–58 FNS Arromanches was reconstructed with a four degree angled flight deck, a mirror landing sight and with other modifications for anti-submarine warfare, including operation of Breguet Alize ASW aircraft.

When used in her training role, she carried Fouga CM-175 Zephyr jet trainers. It did not carry the Etendard type operational when in service.

A Senior Dassault Representative and a technical team flew out to discuss with the RANFAA in June 1959 to discuss the merits of selecting the type.

Details per meeting are not available,.....

As it turned out in 1959, the Government decided to phase out Carrier fixed wing operations by the early 1960's as the service types reached their LOT, though the introduction of the Westland Wessex from 1963 and the later 1965 Indonesian Konfrontasi regenerated the fixed wing operations from 1967, with orders for Trackers and Skyhawks placed and delivered.

But that's another story.....

Gordon Birkett@2015

References:

Fleet Air Arm re-equipment - aircraft evaluation team [Etendard IV aircraft] NAA: MP1049/6, 5119/3/28
wikipedia.org Dassault Etendard IV

Story: “Morituri vos salutantus!”¹.

No 24 Squadron RAAF forming and its Defence of Rabaul: Part 2

Part 2

The Defence of Rabaul

No 24 Squadron RAAF's Historical records are vague due to the loss of most of their records on sight at Rabaul.

RAAF Form A.50 per January 1941, stated that 24 Squadron RAAF was operating as a Advance Striking Force at two locations; One Hudson Flight (“B”) with four aircraft and one Wirraway Flight (“A” with Red and Green Sections) with seven aircraft at the original air strip of Vunakanau, Rabaul, and the remaining Wirraway Flight (“C” with Blue and Yellow Sections) of five aircraft based at Lakunai, Rabaul.

Stirring the hornets' Nest

On the 1st January 1942, an attack and photographic reconnaissance mission by Hudsons A16-13(Lerew), A16-39(Erwin), A16-47(Diethelm) and A16-91 (Murphy) was launched from Rabaul against the Japanese Base of Kap (Kapingamarangi). At 0420 hrs Zulu, they launched an attack with 8 bombs at low level. On the second attack, five direct hits were observed, and appeared to set a fuel store on fire. All aircraft returned safely at Vunakanau, Rabaul by 0623hrs Zulu.

Another bombing raid against the Japanese Base of Kap was performed on the 2nd January 1942 at 1535 hrs Zulu, with three Hudsons (A16-13(Paterson), A16-39 (Lerew) and A16-47(Diethelm)). Arriving over the target at 1830 Hrs Zulu, two aircraft, (A16-13 and A16-47) made low diving attacks on the shore and slipways, each with four 250Lb GP bombs. The third aircraft flown by Lerew, dropped two 250lb GP Bombs on the centre of the island followed by a second stick of two made a direct hit on a Float Plane. All aircraft returned safely by 2129 Hrs Zulu.

The first Japanese Land base bombing raid on Rabaul occurred at 10.45hrs on the 4th January 1942 when sixteen Navy Type 96 Bombers (G3M Betty) of the Chitose Air Group attached to the 24th Air Flotilla at Truk Island attacked Lakunai. Two Wirraways were scrambled, flown by F/Lt Brookes and Sqn Ldr Archibald R. Tindal, but failed to intercept. These Japanese aircraft carried combined forty 60kg fragmentation bombs which resulted in seventeen landing in the Rapindik native housing area, killing a dozen natives. Three bombs struck and cratered the airstrip, with the remaining bombs landing in the harbour.

These were the first bombs dropped on Australian territory and no doubt was actioned by the Japanese to redress earlier RAAF Raids on Kap.

A second raid in the afternoon by eleven Kawanishi Type 97 Flying boats (H6Ks) of the Yokohama Air Group attacked Vunakanau Airdrome with nil results.

An attack against Kap was performed in reply by two Hudsons, A16-47(Lerew) and A16-13(Paterson) when they took off at 1653 hrs Zulu on the 6th January 1942. A bombing run was made by one aircraft on a store, dropping one stick of four 250Lb GP bombs. These overshot and went into the sea.

The other Hudson made a low dive bombing attack on builds and slipways with one stick of four 250Lb GP bombs destroying a sea plane on a slipway. Both aircraft recovered safely back to Rabaul.

On the 7th January 1942, another raid came, this time a further Hudson was destroyed on the ground (A16-13) and A16-47 was heavily damaged. Wirraway A20-437, as stated before, was also damaged.

FORM C.F.		R.A.A.F. Form A.108(A).
WIRRAWAY A20-437 IT: No. 24 Squadron.		
Pilot: F/Lt. B.H.ANDERSON. Obs: P/O. C.A.BUTTERWORTH		Squadron: 24
Duty: Attempted interception.		Place: New Ireland.
		Date 6 / 1 / 42
		Time: 0830Z. hrs.

The first intercept of Japanese aircraft

The first intercept of Japanese aircraft to be fired on, was at 0830Hrs Zulu on the 6th January 1942, when F/Lt B H Anderson (Wirraway "C" Flt CO based at Lakunai) and Observer P/O C A Butterworth in Wirraway **A20-437*** took off in an attempted interception of a flight of nine Kawanishi Flying Boats flying at 8000 feet in altitude (seven in "V" and two in "box" formations) with speed 160mph, over Vunakanau.

After a lengthy period of climbing at around 110mph, stern attacks were made from 300-500 yards with bursts of 200 rounds before the guns were expended.

The enemy formation climbed to 12000 Feet. Further climbing and then diving away attacks were made with the rear Vickers gun (fired in dive) being exposed to enemy aircraft. Nil results, with pilot disengaging some 60 miles from base, with overheated engine. Cylinder temperature gauge went u/s after it reached 280 C. Oil Temperature stabilised at 101 C. Flight Duration was 50 minutes, with 38 Gallons of Fuel and 2 quarts of Oil used. 1200 round of .303Ball used, with a further 500 round from Vickers GO with only one stoppage.

A second Wirraway was actually airborne after A20-437 climbed off the strip. That was stated as Wirraway A20-156, but no details as of the crew or sortie details were recorded.

Post note, A20-437 was also the first Wirraway to be destroyed, as it was damaged by bomb shrapnel and burnt along fuselage cockpit area in a dispersal fire caused by enemy action on the 07/01/42 at Lakunai. Deemed a complete write-off 12/01/42.

The first interception attempt on a reconnaissance aircraft was made a day before the Wirraway Flights arrived, with F/Lt Paterson and F/Lt Erwin trying to catch such an aircraft with Hudson A16-91 and A16-39 respectively, at 2358hrs Zulu, on the 9th December 1941, when a unidentified aircraft made three runs over Rabaul between 12-15000 feet. No contact was made with both aircraft landing at 0110hrs Zulu.

**Not Wirraway A20-128 or A20-137 per previous published stories or accounts state over the past forty years; refer above headline extract of Combat (fighter) Report Form A108 per Report #1, No 24 Squadron Narrative Reports.*

A further Hudson, 6 Squadron's A16-102 "Titwillow" was slightly damaged during this raid. This aircraft and its squadron sister, A16-106 "Yum Yum" were part of a secret *Mikado Flight* over Truk and had only flown in from Namatami. A reconnaissance mission was performed on the same day with nil result at 0552 Hrs Zulu, by three Wirraway aircraft after unidentified three ships were reported some 17 miles east of Kavieng. All aircraft landed at 0810 hrs Zulu.

On the 8th January 1942, 1610 hrs Zulu, Hudson A16-91 (Murphy) was flown to Townsville via Moersby. The following day, 6 Squadron's A16-106(Yeowart) was flown from Rabaul to Townsville direct, landing there at 2250 hrs Zulu. The other 6 Squadron aircraft, A16-102 had departed to Lae for repairs. It would arrive in Townsville via Moersby on the 9th January 1942. *The previous aircraft, A16-106, would depart Townsville for Kavieng later, and then return to Townsville on the 15th January 1942.*

On the 10th January 1942, a reconnaissance mission to Buka Aerodrome by a Wirraway, flown by F/Lt Brooks Serv#299 took off at 2125 hrs Zulu and landed at Rabaul at 0221 hrs Zulu.

Another reconnaissance mission was performed by a flight of Wirraways on Gasmata, Glouster and Talasa Air dromes 0005hrs Zulu on the 12th January 1942



A16-47 is pictured when with 23 Squadron, early in 1941. GRB Vic Lib Collection

Hudson A16-38, piloted by F/Lt Murphy departed Townsville 1649 hrs Zulu on the 12th January 1942, to fly to Port Moresby, and landing there at 2040 hrs Zulu where it remained until the 17th January 1942. Hudson A16-47 after some heavy repair departed Rabaul 1920 hrs Zulu, and flew via Moresby and reached Townsville by 0425 hrs Zulu on the 14th January 1942. *It was later ferried south for repairs that would take over a year to complete.*

Hudson A126-146 flew from Townsville to Moresby, landing 0010 hrs Zulu 15th January 1942.

An additional 24 Squadron reinforcement flight of two Wirraways departed Townsville 2110 hrs Zulu on the 15th January 1942 for Horn Island, arriving at Cooktown for an overnight stop. They continued to Horn Island on the 16th January 1942, arriving at 2122 hrs Zulu.

Another raid arrived on the same day, with the pattern bombing of Lakunai made the 24th Air Flotilla, destroying stockpiles of fuel, flares and bombs, and new and old earth works. Two Wirraways managed to get within 1000 yards of the bombers, but were outside the range of the 0.303 Ball. The following day, Sqn Ldr Lerew tried to intercept a flying boat near Kavieng in a Wirraway, again without affect.

A flight of two Hudsons A16-38(F/Lt Murphy) and A16-146(F/Lt Thorp) were flown from Moresby (1700 hrs Zulu 16/01/42) to Kavieng.

From there, an attack on Kap was made on the 17th January 1942 at 0100 hrs Zulu. At 0320hrs Zulu, the attack was made from 600 feet on a 6000 ton enemy vessel moored outside the lagoon, with eight 250lb GP bombs missing. The aircraft on return was followed by six enemy aircraft which were eluded, with the aircraft returning at 0540 hrs Zulu at Kavieng. A16-39 made a flight from Lae to Rabaul and Salamaua on the same day and departed Rabaul at 0400 hrs Zulu back to Lae.



A16-38 aerial shot GRB Collection

The 24 Squadron reinforcement flight of Wirraway aircraft, A20-128 and A20-321, arrived at Moresby at 0116 hrs Zulu on the 17th January 1942.

On the same day, a patrol of 24 Squadron Wirraway aircraft took off over Vunakanau at 0130 hrs Zulu, for possible interception of enemy aircraft. All aircraft landed at 0300 hrs Zulu with nil sightings. A16-145 ((F/Lt Paterson) flew from Moresby to Lae, via Rabaul. Aircraft took off from Rabaul to fly to Lae at 0759 hrs Zulu.

A20-128 and A20-321 took off from Moresby 2035 hrs Zulu and landed at Salamaua 2215hrs Zulu. They took off again and landed at Vunakanau Airdrome at 0425 hrs Zulu on the 18th January, 1942. This brought up the strength of Wirraways from seven to nine aircraft in Rabaul. Hudson A16-39 (Irwin) flew from Salamaua to Kavieng, landing at 0145 hrs Zulu. A low bombing attack on Kap, along with A16-38(Murphy) from Rabaul was then made by A16-39 at 0500 hrs Zulu destroying one enemy aircraft and launch. A16-39 returned to Kavieng, while A16-38 landed at Rabaul at 0650 hrs Zulu.

The following day, A16-39 (Murphy) carried out a flight from Kavieng to Rabaul, landing at 0055 hrs Zulu, but reported nil sighting of any enemy shipping. A further reconnaissance flight was made unsuccessful by a Wirraway aircraft to confirm enemy shipping in St Georges Channel.

On the last day, three surviving Hudsons (A16-38, A16-39 and A16-91) and ten remaining Wirraways were all that were available at Rabaul. (A20-71, A20-128, A20-177, A20-178, A20-179, A20-303, A20-304, A20-319, A20-321, A20-436)



Ex

23 Sqn Wirraway A20-128 in flight, it was one of the last reinforcement Wirraway aircraft to fly into Rabaul on the 18th January 1942. GRB Collection

Using a sledge hammer to crack a walnut

The Japanese Invasion Fleet (Under R Operation, consisting of the South Seas Force) had left Guam on the 14th January 1942. They had rendezvoused with Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo's 1st Carrier Fleet that had left Truk Island on the seventeenth near the Equator. The Fleet consisted of four Carriers; Akagi, Kaga, Zuikaku and Shokaku, two Battleships; Hiei and Kirishima, two Heavy Cruisers; Tone and Chikuma, one Light Cruiser Abukuma and nine Destroyers.

On the morning of the twentieth, the attack force, under command of Pearl Harbour Architect Commander Mitsu Fuchida, took off to attack the Australian installations at Rabaul in three Aircraft Groups. These groups would undertake a three directional axis attacks from east, west and north (in groups of 20, 33 and 48 aircraft).

The Force consisted of eighteen B5N2 Bombers and nine A6M2 Fighters from the Akagi, twenty-seven B5N2 Bombers and nine A6M2 Fighters from the Kaga, and thirty-eight D3A1 Dive Bombers from the Zuikaku and Shokaku. In total some one hundred and one aircraft.

At 1248hrs local, in the afternoon of the day, the A6M2 Rei-sens had arrived overhead Rabaul in advance. Two Wirraways, Sgt G Herring/P/O A Claire and F/O J Lowe/Sgt A Ashford (A20-179) were airborne on a routine patrol for enemy vessels between Cape Lambert and Wide Bay to the south.

On alert, these two were soon joined by three other "A" Flight Wirraways that were scrambled from Vunakanau (Sgt C Bromley/Sgt R Walsh, Sgt R Little/Sgt D Sheppard (A20-158) and Sgt R Blackman/Sgt Woodcroft.

A further three "C" Flight Wirraways were scrambled from Lakunai, but one Wirraway (A20-71), with F/Lt B H Anderson and Observer P/O C Butterworth, crashed on take-off after swinging off the strip causing the port oleo to collapse. The remaining two Wirraway aircraft, with Sgt W Hewitt/F/O J Tyrrell (A20-177) and Sgt M Milne/Sgt R Harber (A20-178) continued on to climb to the enemy formations.

The first Wirraway to be shot down by escorting A6M2 Rei-sens was A20-179 with F/O J Lowe/Sgt A Ashford, near Praed Point. The other Wirraway, flown by Sgt G Herring/P/O A Claire, tangled with the same fighters and their aircraft sustained heavy damage from multiple attacks. Being not armoured, both pilot and observer received injuries in their legs from canon shell and bullet fragments. With the tail damaged, the aircraft went out of control and plunged down to sea level before Herring regained control. With the Japanese fighters continuing on in search of other quarry, Sgt Herring managed to evade further fighters to belly in his damaged Wirraway on Lakunai Airdrome minutes later.

To the east, Hudson A16-39 (Erwin) was returning to Vunakanau on a seaward patrol at the same time, was attacked some sixteen times by one and then later, two A6M2 Rei-sens. With damage to the instrument panel and glass splinter injuries to his leg, Erwin manage to evade the fighters and land safely after the raid, at Vunakanau.

Meanwhile to the south, six A6M2 Rei-sens attacked Sgt C Bromley/Sgt R Walsh's Wirraway as it climbed over Blanche Bay near Praed Point. The pilot, Sgt C Bromley, was killed instantly and as the aircraft plummeted down, the Observer, Sgt R Walsh jumped, but his chute failed fully open and was killed. Their bodies were returned by Army truck later that day after being retrieved by the gunners at Praed Point.

"C" Flight Wirraway A20-177 with pilot Sgt W Hewitt and Observer F/O J Tyrrell, manage to climb to 9000ft where he saw B5N2 Bombers attacking the wharves at Rabaul. Turning towards the formation, they were intercepted by a single A6M2 Rei-sen and tried to position their Wirraway head on, however it stalled and a one sided attack ensued. After being inflicted with serious fuselage damage, one further 20mm round exploded in the cockpit, severing hydraulic controls and instruments, along with Hewitt being wounded in the left knee and his face covered in hydraulic fluid. As his Wirraway pitched over and fell earthwards following his last stall, Tyrell was thrown out of the aircraft. As he plunged, he desperately clawed for his D-ring, but it was missing. Having caught on the Wirraway as he was thrown out, his chute was already deploying. He landed safely where Lark Force Soldiers picked him up.

After recovering from the dive, Hewitt manage to escape into cloud and remain there until after the raid, whereupon he made a successful landing at Vunakanau Airdrome in his damaged Wirraway A20-177.

Meanwhile "A" Flight's Wirraway A20-158 with Sgt R Little/Sgt D Sheppard experienced the same one sided air battle with a dozen A6M2 Rei-sen swarming around their single aircraft. With only slight damage to the tail, they managed to play a hide and seek in the clouds until after the raid. They landed safely at Vunakanau Airdrome with slight damaged to the aircraft and no injury.

Sgt M Milne/Sgt R Harber in Wirraway A20-178 after failing to set up attacks played the same game of a hide and seeks in the clouds until after the raid where they landed at Vunakanau Airdrome without damage or injury. Unfortunately, fellow "A" Flight Wirraway A20-304 with Sgt R Blackman/Sgt Woodcroft was last seen in aerial combat with several A6M2 Rei-sen and their ultimate fate is unknown.

The time taken for all of the above Wirraway interceptions had been seven minutes with the loss of three Wirraway crews, with six other individual crew members wounded or injured.

On the 20th January 1942, Hudson A16-145 (Paterson) left Salamaua for Kavieng, thence to Rabaul but while on route, after its last radio contact when Moresby advised of bad weather on route, contact was lost. The aircraft had disappeared, and it wasn't until 2008 that it was found.

The two surviving Wirraways, A20-156 and A20-178, were flown out on the 21st January 1942 to Salamaua via Gasmata. They then proceeded to Moresby; landing 0040 Zulu on the 22nd of January 1942. A16-38 (Irwin) flew from Rabaul to Moresby with Air Raid casualties, landing at 0728 hrs Zulu. The next day the aircraft was flown to Townsville, but developed engine trouble on route, forcing it to land at Cooktown 0130 hrs Zulu. As of this date, 24 Squadron was effectively 'hors de combats', at this stage, with 6 Squadron and 23 Squadrons taking over Hudson related operations for the next week as a Composite Squadron with both 6/23 and 24 Squadron surviving Crews and aircraft.

Air Evacuation: Put Put, 23rd January 1942

A flight of two Empire flying Boats (A18-11 F/Lt M Mather and A18-12 F/Lt J Grey) flew from Samurair to Put Put to evacuate RAAF personnel. Both aircraft air borne 0403 hrs Zulu and landed and embarked 86 evacuees and returned to Samurair by 1226 hrs Zulu.

<u>PERSONNEL CARRIED BY A18-11.</u>			5.
<u>SUM SUM - SAMARAI.</u>			
<u>A.O.B.</u>	<u>A.I.F.</u>	<u>24 SQUADRON</u>	
LAC SHAW	PT. WATTS G. VX32570	CPL. LAMB	
P/O SHAW	PT. SCULLY K. N246437	P/O EDMUNDS	
F/L ROBINSON	CPL JACKSON H.D. V72170	LAC LLOYD	
CPL. SHIELD	PT. FORBES A.E. N246397	LAC BLAIR	
ACI O'GRADY	PT. WORMAN R.A. N246446	F/S GAMBLING	
ACI JARVIS	PT. GIDDINGS J.F. V27719	LAC PEARSON	
ACI JENKINS	PT. LONGMAN G.G. VX28362	SGT. SHAW	
ACI WELCH	CPL HARDY G.W. VX46479	LAC McDONALD	
ACI ANDERSON	CPL WOOLF L.R. V72102	SGT BUCKLEY (10)	
ACI SMITH	PT. APPLEBY W.A. N255496	LAC PRICE	
LAC LAWRENCE	CPL HARRIS W.R. V72167		
LAC BRIDGEMAN	PT. WHITTY S.G. V72210	<u>CIVILIANS</u>	
LAC PIRIE	SGT LEVY K.J. V72101	MR. VIALA A.P.O.	
(13)	PTE KLAPROTH C.J. Q1716	MR. ROWE H.H. TWG.	
	PT. GATO V.P. T44273	ROWE W.C.	
	PT. TABOR E.E. S15939	MUNRO K.J. (4)	
	PT. BEYERS L.F. V11499		
	PT. HEARN G.G. TP6691		
	PT. STAFFORD C.W. T44241		
	(19)		
Total 46			

<u>PERSONNEL CARRIED ON A 18-12.</u>		6.
<u>SUM SUM - SAMARAI.</u>		
<u>24 SQUADRON</u>	<u>A.O.B. PERSONNEL (R.A.A.F. MORESBY)</u>	
CPL. McFARLANE	ACI JOHNSTON A.H.	
LAC YELVERTON	CPL BUZACOTT	
LAC LEESON	CPL DUHN H.B.	
ACI WARD	CPL DAVIDSON W.J.	
LAC CLARKE	CPL COMBY S.	
CPL JONES	ACI DANVILL N.R.	
CPL CHARD	CPL MANSFIELD	
LAC ENDRES	CPL IRWIN N.R.	
SGT BROWN	CPL BRAIN	
CPL WILSON	CPL REEVE	
LAC SHANNON	CPL STEAN F.H.	
P/SGT FORD	CPL COLLINSON H.G.	
LAC JAGO	CPL LINKE G.G.	
LAC BODMAN	CPL REES R.J.	
SGT CORNWALL	P/O MANIFOLD	
LAC FARRUGIA		
LAC HALSTEAD		
ACI MILES		
SGT ROONEY		
LAC PEAREY		
CPL TYRELL		
CPL WALSH		
LAC McPHERSON		
LAC JAMES		
SGT O'BRIEN		
CPL MOWBRAY		
W/C LERREW		
F/L THOMSON		
F/L WEST		
P/O SCHUMACHER		
P/O TYRELL		
(31)		
<u>CIVILIANS.</u>		
MACKENZIE M.J. (2)		
TARGETT T.H.		
<u>A.I.F.</u>		
PERRY A. 22nd BTH (2)		
WOODWARD M.C. 22ND		

Post research analysis of the aircraft:

I'd like to add some details and clarity on the final Wirraway disposition as of the 24th January, 1942, the day after the Japanese invaded. Two Wirraways as previously mentioned, were evacuated from Rabaul to Salamaua on the 20th January 1942, **A20-156** and **A20-178**.

These returned to Townsville some days later after providing Port Moresby's only aerial defence, joining **A20-66** at Townsville.

All 24 Squadron Wirraways destroyed in the air/land or left at Rabaul were written off per File entry 9/16/277 on the 02/02/42.

277
2.2.42 " " D. 2. 158 (7437) D. 2. 158 (7437) D. 2. 158 (7437)
Disposal of Wirraway Airframes
A20-128, 437, 71, 177, 319, 179,
304, 436, 303, 321, and 51-HI-d.
Wasp Engines 7940, 365
173, 149, 296, 7757, 272
364, 291, 202.

It seems that at least two Wirraway Aircraft were, though damaged up to the invasion; survived relatively intact under their new owners. I can confirm two actual airframes that survived post invasion:



Sgt W Hewitt's 24 Squadron's Wirraway A20-177 abandoned at Vunakanau. **GRB ER Collection**



*24 Squadron's Wirraway A20-71, pictured along with supply stores at Vunakanau some days after its take-off accident on the 20th January 1942. A20-71 crashed on take-off Lakunai on the 20th January 1942 responding to a Japanese Air attack. Crew were P/O C.A. Butterworth Serv#263496 and his Observer, F/Lt B.H. Anderson Serv#260770. **GRB ER Collection***



*A Picture of 24 Squadron's Wirraway A20-319, under Japanese control at Lakunai. **GRB ER Collection***

Post Note: slow reinforcements

Of the surviving five 24 Squadron RAAF Wirraways, A20-156 and A20-178 were at Port Moresby, along with the damaged A20-154. A20-69 was operational with a crew at Townsville, with A20-66 held unserviceable.



Post Rabaul Wirraway A20-474 pictured in early 1942. GRB Collection

Reinforcement Hudsons, A16-111/130/163/169 were being flown up from the south to Townsville after January 1942. More Wirraway reinforcement followed soon after, A20-444/470/471/472/473/474/470/369/494/495/505/507 would arrive in the following fortnight.

The Squadron's Hudsons would cease to be part of the 6/23/24 Composite Squadron Flights as of the 19th February 1942, with its Hudson Flight officially being transferred to the newly formed 32 Squadron RAAF. The Squadron then became a fully equipped Wirraway Unit until July 1942 when P-39F Airacobras joined the establishment in a separate Flight, alongside two flights of Wirraways at Camden, NSW.

Gordon R Birkett@2015

Sources: "Morituri vos salutantus!" 1. Radio Message sent by Wg Cdr Lerew, after being composed by Chaplain John L. May, Padre 24 Sqn RAAF 21/01/42.

NAA Document and Book Sources:

RAAF Northern Area Headquarters A50 Sheets

RAAF Port Moresby A50 Sheets

Evacuation of Rabaul by No 24 Squadron

No 24 Squadron Formation Organisation and Movement

RAAF Squadron narrative reports - 24 Squadron

Number 24 Squadron - Rabaul - Operational control and difficulties

Wirraway and Hudson E/E-88 Cards

Conversion of aircraft engines - File 1

Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1945 Series 3 Vol 1, Douglas Gillison AWM @1962

Fortress Rabaul, Bruce Gamble @2010

The Hudson Story, Book two, David Vincent @2010

Odd Shots: 60's to infinity



Has it been 5 years almost already since they past! Pictured during 1988 Australia Day Flypast some 27 years ago, before they went grey! Photo Credit Unknown. And, below, do we all miss these performances!





F-111AUP A8-113 at Boeing Amberley in the early 00's. GRB Collection



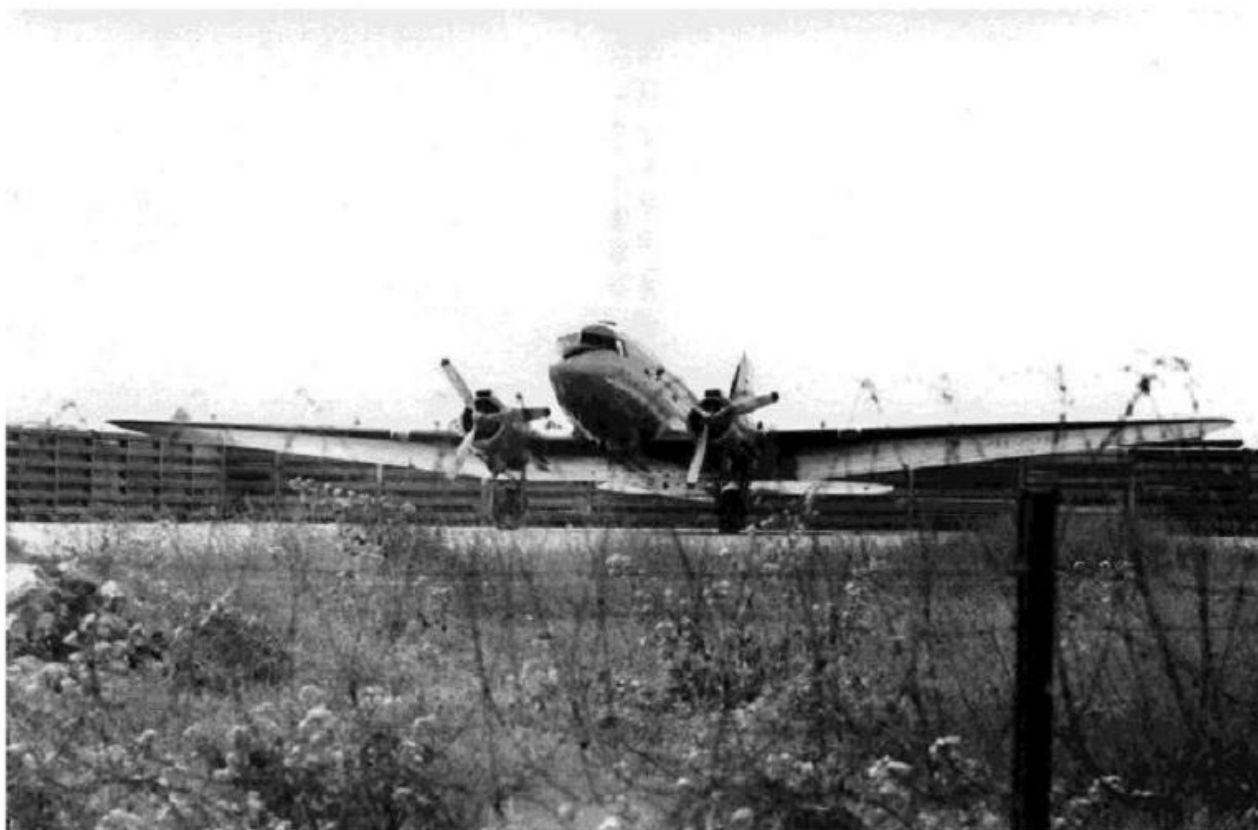
Prior 80's shot before going grey and suffering AUP mods. Source unknown



It looks like a RAF Dakota serial number ZD215. It is, but it's actually RAAF Dakota **A65-69** on its way to Berlin. Departed for West Germany 06/06/80 under the command of Flt Lt Garry Dunbar RAAF and arrived in West Germany 11 days later. Placed on RAF registry as ZD215 for delivery on 18/06/80 to Berlin Gatow for preservation as due to treaty details that only British, US and French serialed aircraft were allowed safe passage through the Berlin air corridors up to 1989. Flown there by Sqn Ldr Al Culloway RAF and AV Marshall David Evans who was a veteran of the Berlin Airlift. On Display at the Berlin Airlift Museum, RAF Gatow Germany currently. RAF Official



A65-69 when In RAAF Uniform. Photo Credit Unknown



Ex-RAAF Dakota **A65-96**, now with the Cambodian Air Force in 1973, was eventually written off after a ground looped on 31st January 74, while on a takeoff from Siem-Reap airport, as pictured below with sans engine. GRB CIA Collection





A undated A65-98 picture in VIP fit with curtains, with faded scheme . Held Photo Credit Unknown

Next Issue, the Spring 2015 edition, will be out circa late September 2015.

