



ADF Serials Newsletter

For those interested in Australian Military Aircraft History
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Editor's Note:

Hi everyone. Another busy month with lots happening – our first Australian serviceman killed in Iraq, one miner killed and 2 rescued after 2 weeks underground. Our thoughts are with their families at this time.

This month we have two offerings by Gordon B – Spitfire profiles and presentation Spitfires in Australian Service. We have details of a new book on Clive (Killer) Caldwell and as usual, Can you help and feedback sections.

Until next month,

Jan

Website News –Image Gallery Unavailable

Unfortunately, the image gallery is not available for viewing at present. The ISP is building a new web server to handle the gallery. We hope that it will be up and running shortly and apologise for any inconvenience to users.



Presentation Spitfires in Australian Service Vers 2 – Gordon Birkett

It was early in World War II when Lord Beaverbrook, the Minister for Wartime Production, originated the idea of the "presentation aircraft". The idea was a morale boosting exercise for a population that was facing, almost alone, the onslaught of the German war machine in 1940.

A "price list" was set out with £5,000 for a single-engine aircraft, £20,000 for a twin-engine aircraft and £40,000 for a four-engine aircraft. These did not represent the actual cost of the

type of aircraft, but was considered a fair value to have one's assigned name in four inch high yellow characters on the fuselage forward of the cockpit, as in the Spitfire's case.

A presentation Spitfire at £5,000 came to represent the ultimate choice, with many towns and organisations starting "Spitfire Funds" to help do their bit for the war effort. Many went to great lengths to raise the money required, resulting in around 11% of the total production of Spitfire Mk I, II, or V versions built during 1940-1942. How many is that? Nearly 1000 named Spitfire aircraft in fact.

In Australia, I have found only one example where permission was requested for the establishment of such a Spitfire Fund, the "**Western Australian Spitfire Fund**" during 1941 to purchase a Spitfire for UK operations. There are no further details as to whether the required £5,000 was raised or from the records available, whether a Spitfire was so named.

I suspect that the answer, following research on some War Cabinet Minutes documents dated 4th June 1941, lies in the following quote:

"The Treasurer referred to a request that has been received for authority to permit the raising of funds for the purchase of Spitfire aircraft along the lines of the appeals which have proven so popular in Britain. It was observed that any funds would really amount to contributions to the British Treasury, and that they could not be authorised. The only class of appeal for funds for overseas purposes which are to be permitted are those for special purposes, such as the relief of citizens in bombed areas".

Thus died the one and only attempt by Australia to have its own presentation Spitfire.

Though having been denied a named Spitfire through public subscription, our association with presentation Spitfires didn't end there as 452 and 457 Squadrons had at various times several on strength during 1941-1942, as the following selection shows:

X4936 "In Memory of RJ Mitchell" ff17/01/41, 6MU 01/02/41, **457Sqn RAAF** 23/06/41, 58OTU 22/10/41, Flying accident Cat B 26/11/42, repaired by Scottish Aviation Ltd, 5FTS Cranwell 12/07/43, Royal Navy Deposit Account 15/01/44.

P8380 "Black Velvet" 9MU 30/04/41, 74Sqn RAF 09/05/41, 403Sqn RCAF 24/07/41, 54Sqn RAF 04/08/41, 403Sqn RCAF 25/08/41, **457Sqn RAAF** 27/09/41, hit lorry at base Cat E 01/12/41 53 OTU 15/06/42, flew into ground bad weather, Cymmer, Wales 15/08/42, Soc 21/08/42.

P8085 "Garfield Weston VII" 38MU 26/02/41, 303Sqn RAF 13/03/41, **452Sqn RAAF** 27/05/41, Cat D crashed Conisholme, Yorks Cat E, 05/07/41. Soc 11/07/41.

P8361 "Krakatao (NEI)" 6MU 10/04/41, 303Sqn RAF 18/04/41, **452Sqn RAAF** 04/06/41, FTR Ops 09/08/41, Soc 10/09/41.

X4908 "Southern Railway Invicta" ff27/12/40, 8MU 04/01/41, **457Sqn RAAF** 22/06/41, 130Sqn RAF 02/11/41, 81Sqn RAF 16/02/42, 165Sqn RAF 12/04/42, 5UAS(University Air Sqn) 22/08/42, P&PSM 06/01/43 to cvt to MkVa, 61OTU 15/06/43, Flying accident Cat B 18/07/43, Soc 06/06/45.

On a final note, one that didn't make Australian service but was accepted by the renowned red haired 452 Sqn Spitfire Fighter Ace, Squadron Leader Keith "Bluey" Truscott on the 27/08/41 was **AB935, "Gingerbread"**. **Redheads of Britain** funded this particular aircraft which later went on to serve with 92 Sqn RAF and was finally shipped to the Middle East in 1943.

Profile Series #1: Spitfires in Australia Vers1/06 – Gordon Birkett

As a departure from writing, I intend to do a series of Profiles as a delightful change. Where possible they will be accurate as can be made, but will be open for constructive criticisms and feedback. What we're aiming for is a standard so that the end products are accurate as humanly possible. Here we present 548Sqn RAF, Darwin NT 1944-1945.

Profile # 1 A58-320



Details: A58-320 Model: LF.VIII RAF Serial# JG107 Coded TS-W Delivered 12/43. Served in 548Sqn RAF Darwin 1944-1945. Authorised for write off 05/46, struck off 11/48.

Profile #2 A58-482



Details: A58-482 Model LF.VIII RAF Serial: JG655 Code TS-V Delivered 06/44. 548Sqn 1944-1945 Authorised for write off 05/46, struck off 11/48.

Profile #3 A58-372



Details: A58-372 Model LF.VIII RAF Serial# JG106 Coded TS-J Delivered 01/44. Engine cut out and aircraft seen to dive into sea, with pilot, W/O B Clinton 548Sqn RAF not

bailing out. Aircraft crashed into Clarence Strait off some 16 miles north of Cape Hotham 31/07/45.

Sources: AWM Pics, 548Sqn A50 History Sheets, Personal Collection Pictures. GRB@2006

Can You Help?

Cyprus Safari. Sean Strang recently sent us the following message. "I am trying to obtain a copy of Cyprus Safari by Pete Ingram, and I keep hitting your site when I search for it. As I have never seen this book, I was wondering if someone could scan the cover of it for me and send it to me. Also if someone knows where I can obtain a copy, I would love to hear from them.

Thanks in advance for you help. Ps love the site, it is now in my favourites.

Much appreciated.

Sean Strang

If you can assist Sean, please use the contact link:

<http://www.adf-serials.com/contact>

Feedback

Tracy Stuart contacted the ADF Serials group to provide us with additional information on the survivors of A72-61. Tracy sent the following message:

My father-in-law was one the survivors of A72-61 - there were more survivors and I can supply the other names. We are also looking to contact anyone who may have known him.

Dean was able to provide the following information:

1 Jul 45 B-24 Liberator A72-61 21SQN
Gp Capt Donald McLean 78
Flt Lt John Alfred Roy 266200
W/O Harley Russell Bardwell 419950
Sgt Dennis Lodge Martin 8811.

On the first day of the Balikpapan invasion by Allied forces a massive aerial bombardment campaign was undertaken against Japanese defensive positions around the landing area prior to the Allied ground forces going ashore. Along with USAAF aircraft twenty RAAF Liberators, seven from 21SQN, seven from 24SQN and six from 23 Squadron had earlier dropped about two hundred 500lb prior to Australian troops landing. But it was in the afternoon when GPCapt McLean, the newly appointed Commanding Officer of 82WG, was flying as an aerial observation aircraft and had shortly before relieved another aircraft when his aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire.

Ordering several crew members to bail out 5 members remained with the aircraft while the others parachuted into the sea and were soon picked up by nearby ships but the aircraft soon crashed killing McLean and three others and miraculously one survived.

We look forward to including the names of the survivors in a future edition – Ed.

New Book - Clive Caldwell, Air Ace (Kristen Alexander)

Don Clark sent us the following information on this new book

Group Captain Clive Robertson Caldwell DSO, DFC & Bar, officially attributed 27½ victories, was Australia's highest scoring fighter pilot of World War II and the only Australian to become an "ace" in both Mediterranean and Pacific theatres. Caldwell flew Tomahawks (250 Squadron RAF), Kittyhawks (112 Squadron RAF) and Spitfires (1 Fighter Wing RAAF). In the Middle East, AOCinC AM Tedder endorsed his Logbook with this assessment: "An excellent leader and a first-class shot".

Caldwell, widely admired if not always liked, himself heartily disliked the nickname usually applied to him - and out of respect, I'll not use it here. A significant figure in the RAAF, and a man not afraid to stick his neck out in more ways than one, he died in 1994 at the age of 84.

Kristen Alexander, a Canberra researcher, is a member of the Spitfire Society and the Military Historical Society of Australia (and with her husband David Fax, operates Alexander Fax Booksellers, a mainly military bookshop).

In a new biography to be published in July 2006 by Allen and Unwin, Kristen has toiled over the past four years to compile a warts-and-all account of Caldwell's war-time career from start to finish. In calling on official records, his own papers and photo collection, and Mrs Jean Caldwell's scrapbook spanning 60 years, Kristen's fully-referenced work aims provide a definitive study of scope and depth not previously attempted.

Advance orders (for payment later) for "Clive Caldwell, Air Ace" (300+ pages, paperback, two maps, fifty photos, price \$A35 +p&p) can be placed through www.alexanderfaxbooks.com.au, or by email direct to alexfax@alexanderfaxbooks.com.au

Don has a personal interest in the book – as well as being friends with the author, there is a family link to Clive Caldwell. In the Middle East in mid May 1941, the then P/O Caldwell with F/O Wolsey of 250 Squadron flew their two Tomahawks on detachment from Palestine for duty in Cyprus. The navigation escort for the pair on the 200 mile over-water leg from Aquir to Nicosia was flown by 211 Squadron Blenheim I L4910, crew: Sgt Pilot Jock Marshall DFM, Sgt Observer CFR Clark (my late father) and WOp/AG Sgt Bill Baird.

Australian War Memorial bio: <http://www.awm.gov.au/people/18265.asp>

Allen and Unwin blurb
<http://www.allenandunwin.com/Exports/product.asp?ISBN=1741147050>

211 Squadron RAF website
www.211squadron.org

If you have something for the newsletter or would like to submit an article, query or image, please use the following links:

<http://www.adf-serials.com/contact>