

## Empire C Class Flying Boats

A compile of data from many different sources, by Wynnum B Graham.

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The " Empire " C Class flying boats were :-

|           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| Short S23 | 31 built |
| Short S30 | 9 built  |
| Short S33 | 2 built  |

They were developed for the purposes of the British Government Empire Air Mail Scheme, for service England to Australia and Africa. Known as 'C' Class, all aircraft received names starting with the letter 'C'.

They were to be operated jointly by Imperial Airways [later BOAC] and Qantas Empire Airways [QEA]; QEA was a company jointly owned by Imperial Airways and Q.A.N.T.A.S.[being the initial letters of – Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Service.]

QEA was to purchase six aircraft, and the whole fleet was to operate in a homogenous fashion, allowing the fleet to circulate fully, but the crews were to remain in their own areas, ie

|          |                      |
|----------|----------------------|
| Imperial | UK to Singapore      |
| QEA      | Singapore to Sydney. |

QEA originally bought six aircraft :-

|        |                    | Acquire | Dispose |
|--------|--------------------|---------|---------|
| VH-ABA | <i>Carpentaria</i> | Jun38   | Aug42   |
| VH-ABB | <i>Coolangatta</i> | Mar38   | Jul40   |
|        | "                  | Jul43   | Oct44   |
| VH-ABC | <i>Coogee</i>      | Sep38   | Jun40   |
| VH-ABD | <i>Corio</i>       | Oct38   | Sep39   |
| VH-ABE | <i>Coorong</i>     | Sep38   | Sep39   |
| VH-ABF | <i>Coote</i>       | Apr38   | Aug42   |

**12Dec38** - *Coorong* VH-ABE suffered damage whilst moored in Darwin Harbour. At high tide in a violent storm, was blown onto a rock wall, was not immersed. Freight to England, *Coorong* was repaired and returned to service, only to be exchanged to BOAC in Sep39, for RAAF purposes.

**By End 1938** - Three Ex Guinea Airways pilots joined QEA. Orm Denny Apr36, C R Gurney Jun36, and A A Koch Jul38. Also G Hemsworth, who was briefly with Guinea Airways after PAT closed.

**12Mar39** - *Capella* G-ADUY was destroyed during a water manouvre at Batavia, NEI. Capt HUSSEY was in command, struck uncharted obstacle. Was dismantled and shipped to England, but water damage precluded repair.

**1Sep39** - War was looming. QEA was instructed by the Australian Government that their service to Singapore would cease. However, five days later, when it was judged that Italy and Japan would not immediately enter the war, and Imperial Airways would be able to continue to operate across the Mediterranean, the service was resumed now twice weekly instead of the previous three times weekly. By 15Sep39, QEA had adjusted to the revised schedules.

..... It would seem that the RAAF requirement for two flying boats influenced these arrangements. RAAF 11 Sqn formed 21Sep39, with two Empire boats which had been impressed and militarised.

The RAAF, in due course, was to acquire five Empire Flying Boats. They were limited to "impressing" QEA aircraft, as distinct from Imperial Airways aircraft. Two "swaps" were made to achieve this, for the first two RAAF acquisitions. The next two RAAF acquired Empire flying boats were from the original "QEA six".

The last of the RAAF Empire flying boats [*Clifton*, A18-14, previously G-AFPZ, later VH-ACD] was, commercially leased by the Australian Government, straight from BOAC. QEA only came into the picture for *Clifton* [owner-ship wise] after the RAAF released it from their service.

#### **First Two Swaps.**

|                  |        |                        |       |
|------------------|--------|------------------------|-------|
| <i>Centaurus</i> | G-ADUT | to RAAF as A18-10      | Sep39 |
| <i>Calypso</i>   | G-AEUA | to RAAF as A18-11.     | Sep39 |
| <i>Corio</i>     | VH-ABD | to Imperial as G-AEUH. | Sep39 |
| <i>Coorong</i>   | VH-ABE | to Imperial as G-AEUI. | Sep39 |

*Centaurus* and *Calypso* were handily positioned at the Australia end of the route when the RAAF needed aircraft. *Coorong*, repaired in UK after its Darwin storm damage, was at the UK end when a swap was necessary, as was *Corio*.

*Corio* [now G-AEUH] was shot down 30Jan42 by the Japanese, off the Timor coast. [QEA crew of course, being in Australia's area.]

*Coorong* survived the war, was converted to components in the UK in 1947.

RAAF 11 Sqn operated *Centaurus* and *Calypso*, initially out of Port Moresby, and initially with ex QEA pilots GURNEY, SIMS, PURTON, and HEMSWORTH, who had been on the RAAF reserve, and transferred to full time RAAF duty, as did other QEA staff.

**1Apr40** - IAL, Imperial Airways Limited became known as BOAC British Overseas Airways Corporation, IAL and British Airways having been taken over by the British Government.

The QEA peacetime operations ran only from 26Jul38 to 3Sep39, Sydney to Singapore, but operations at the Australia end continued relatively undisturbed until the Japanese entered the war 07Dec41.

**Jun40** – Two more to RAAF service - No swaps were necessary, as these were QEA aircraft.

|                    |           |                    |
|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| <i>Coogee</i> ,    | ex VH-ABC | to RAAF as A18-12. |
| <i>Coolangatta</i> | ex VH-ABB | to RAAF as A18-13. |

#### **The RAAF Empire Flying Boats** (in brief)

##### **A18-10**

Sep39 - G-ADUT *Centaurus* impressed to RAAF service from QEA.

Dec41 – working out of Darwin, servicing RAAF bases in NEI, Koepang, Ambon, Buru.

03Mar42 - *Centaurus* A18-10 was destroyed by enemy action on Broome Harbour

##### **A18-11**

Sep39 – G-AEAU *Calypso* impressed to RAAF service from QEA.

Dec41 – 11 Sqn, working in New Guinea area, Rabaul evacuations, etc.

Jan42 – working in New Guinea area, Rabaul evacuations, etc.

16Feb42 – 33 Sqn is formed, takes over Empire Flying Boats.  
08Aug42 - *Calypso* A18-11, ex G-AEUA, sank near Daru, New Guinea, following damage sustained in a heavy seas landing for rescue of survivors of torpedoed steamship Mamuta.

#### **A18-12**

Jun40 – VH-ABC *Coogee* impressed to RAAF service from QEA  
Jan42 – working in New Guinea area, Rabaul evacuations, etc.  
16Feb42 – 33 Sqn is formed, takes over Empire Flying Boats.  
27Feb42 - *Coogee* A18-12, ex VH-ABC, pilot Flt Lt Love, RAAF 33 Sqn, crashed during water landing at Townsville. RAAF crew killed.

#### **A18-13**

Jun40 – VH-ABB *Coolangatta* impressed to RAAF service from QEA.  
08Nov41 – with 11 Sqn, working out of Darwin to Ambon, NEI etc.  
Jan42 – working in NEI area - evacuations in late Jan42.  
29Jul43 – released from RAAF, returned to Qantas Empire Airways, again as VH-ABB.  
11Oct44 - *Coolangatta* VH-ABB, pilots BRAIN and CALDWELL, was lost during mechanical trouble emergency landing at Rose Bay, Sydney.

#### **A18-14**

12Mar42 – G-AFPZ *Clifton* leased from BOAC to RAAF.  
14Mar42 – allotted to 33 Sqn.  
26Jun43 – Released from RAAF service – bought by QEA, registered then as VH-ACD.  
18Jan44 - *Clifton* VH-ACD, HUSSEY and ASHLEY, was lost during a training landing accident at Rose Bay, Sydney. Brought ashore, damaged now by salt water, was converted to components.

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**19Jan41** - A separate QEA operation to Dili, Portugese Timor, was started. This was a fortnightly service, using Dili as an alternate to Koepang. Mostly, this was influenced by increasing Japanese activity. In Oct40, the Japanese flew the first of a number of survey flights to Dili, using Kawanishi flying boats from Pulau.

**15Aug41** - 11 Sqn Empire flying boat, in secrecy, took 15 installation personnel , in mufti, (from Darwin) to Koepang, Laha, and Namlea.

**Late Sep41** - 80 follow-up personnel were transported by 11 Sqn Empire flying boat to Namlea, Laha, Halong and Koepang.

**26Sep41** - Four (Melbourne based) 2 Sqn Hudsons do a visit as guests of the Dutch to Ambon and Timor, assesing airfield facilities. Darwin based 13 Sqn would have assisted in this.

**Sep41** - The Karachi extension starts, extra pilots were needed. Gurney, Sims, and Purton were seconded back from RAAF to QEA.

**8Nov41** - Four 2 Sqn Hudsons pass through Darwin for another NEI airfields inspection, returning about 13Nov41. Also at this time, 11 Sqn flew Empire Flying Boat A18-13 to NEI inspecting naval bases at Halong (Ambon), etc. It returned to Darwin on 13Nov41, followed closely by the 2 Sqn Hudsons. The Hudsons (and senior officials) round trip from Melbourne to NEI islands possibly encompassed 6-15Nov41.

**Possibly 8, 9 or 10Nov41** - Empire flying boat A18-13 (Pilot F Lt J M Hampshire) (brother of S Ldr Keith Hampshire, Signals Officer, Darwin) flew in to Darwin on the way to examine Halong and other Dutch NEI Naval bases, and to carry in specialist equipment.

**13Nov41** - 11 Sqn Empire Flying Boat A18-13 stages through Darwin again, followed closely by the 2 Sqn Hudsons.

**By Dec41** - Only two of the six original QEA Empire flying boats remained in Australian registration markings. Both were operating on the Sydney - Durban 'Horseshoe Route'.

*Carpentaria* VH-ABA and *Coote* VH-ABF.

Soon they would be isolated at the Africa end of the service, not to reach Australia again as a QEA aircraft.

... Also note that in Aug42, when QEA has recovered somewhat from the dreadful time and losses of Mar42, when QEA wanted to enter military contracts [flights to Port Moresby], QEA had on hand only :-

*Coriolanus* G-AETV soon VH-ABG

*Camilla* G-AEUB soon VH-ADU

Exchanges again took place, Aug42, the above two coming to QEA ownership, the below two going to BOAC ownership.

*Carpentaria* VH-ABA became G-AFBJ

*Coote* VH-ABF became G-AFBL

**6Dec41**- Empire flying boats A18-10 & A18-12 from 11 Sqn Port Moresby arrived Darwin, under F Lt J McL Hampshire and F Lt Norm Fader.

Advance parties of 2 and 13 Sqns were dispatched by flying boat from Darwin to :-

Koepang 30 men West Timor

Laha, Ambon 30 men Airfield

Halong, Ambon 15 men Flying boat base.

Namlea, Buru 16 men 100 miles from Ambon.

**7Dec41** - A flying boat was flying from Ambon to Koepang; Gp Capt Scherger was aboard this aircraft. They spotted Japanese pearling mother ship *Nanyo Maru* - 2 Sqn Hudsons sank this vessel next day.

**8Dec41 [Aust date]** - The Japanese entered the war. Soon, Singapore and the East Indies islands were being attacked.

**13Dec41** - Capt Tapp was requested to fly fuel supplies from Singapore to Sabang Island, which is off the northern tip of Sumatra. *Corsair* G-ADVB was fitted with a 100 gal extra fuel tank for this.

**15Dec41** - *Corio*, Gurney, G-AEUH, was challenged by the RAF when flying in to Singapore.

**Dec41** - For two months until 14Feb42, the Singapore service was extended to Karachi, as BOAC was very busy at the UK end. For this extension of service, some former QEA pilots were released from RAAF service, back to QEA.

**15Dec41** - QEA Reserve Empire fboat was flown out of Singapore. This was not a schedule flight, was the [Singapore based] reserve aircraft [with spares etc] being evacuated to Batavia. Singapore now ceased to be a maintenance base.

**17Dec41** - *Centaurus*, A18-10 was at Ambon doing evacuation. Had been servicing RAAF off-shore bases.

**19Dec41** - 12 officers of RAAF 1 or 8 Sqns or both left Singapore by Qantas [sic] flying boat for Darwin, where they would take delivery of six replacement Hudsons ex RAAF 6 Sqn.

**21Dec41** - Empire fboat *Cambria* G-ADUV, pilot Purton, arrived Kallang, Singapore, from Rangoon, via Sabang, Sumatra [refuel], and passing Medan which was under attack, to Sibolga, some delay, then to Singapore.

**22Dec41** - *Cassiopeia* G-ADUX arrived Seletar, from Rangoon, via Andaman Islands, brought in supplies of ammunition.

**23Dec41** - A QEA flying boat departed Darwin 23Dec41, reached Brisbane 24Dec41. It carried some US pilots of 27th B Gp, who had come from Philippines to pick up their Dauntless bombers at Brisbane.

**26Dec41** - 11 Sqn Empire fboat A18-11, ex G-AEAU, departed Rabaul for Australia with 51 evacuees.

**29Dec41** - Empire fboat *Cassiopeia* G-ADUX sank at Sabang, struck debris during take-off, four passengers drowned. F Off Blunt made rescue attempts. Had been ferrying fuel and supplies to the RAF's staging post.

**17Jan42** - Empire fboat A18-13, ex VH-ABB, pilot Hampshire, called in at Koepang on the way back from Sourabaya to Broome, having delivered ammunition for the USAAF. At Koepang, he picked up women, children and wounded evacuees.

**22Jan42** - Time frame -- Rabaul taken by Japanese this day.

Two Empire flying boats set out from Port Moresby to evacuate people from Rabaul, but the Japanese intervened. The two aircraft overnighted at Samarai. Captains were F Lts L Grey, A18-12 and M Mather, A18-11. On 23Jan42, they evacuated 50 and 46 personnel respectively from Sum Sum, overland evacuees from Rabaul. Next day, Grey returned, taking 49 evacuees from Tol, back to Samarai. Some [35 RAAF] survivors went to Port Moresby by Catalina on 25Jan42, others [42 with Mather and 22 with Grey] direct to Townsville in the Empire F Boats on 26Jan42.

**28Jan42** - RAAF Empire f-boat, pilot Hampshire, flew out sick and injured from Halong, Ambon, as the evacuation begins.

[J Hampshire - Regular RAAF officer, served 11 and 33 Sqns, CO 41 Sqn 1942-43, CO 461 Sqn 1944.]

**29Jan42** - John Hampshire's f-boat returned to Halong, Ambon, for a second evacuation flight. Takes off just after midnight. (Some reports give that he had done two evacuation flights to Ambon prior to this.)

**30Jan42** - 11 Sqn's A18-13, pilot Hampshire, departed Ambon with evacuees, his third such flight in seven days.

**30Jan42** - *Corio* - pilot Koch -ex VH-ABD, now G-AEUH, is shot down by enemy fighters near Koepang. It had left Darwin that day, to bring back refugees from Sourabaya. Pilots Koch and Lyne and three passengers survived, three crew and ten passengers were lost.

As a consequence, QEA initiated a route from Broome to Tjilatjap, enemy action ruling out Sourabaya.

**4Feb42** - Enemy action at Singapore now intense. Last Empire flying boat flight out of Singapore, to Batavia, was *Corinna*, G-AEUC, pilot Crowther ..... had come up from Batavia previous day, 3Feb42. (Some reports give this as departing Singapore 5Feb42. )

**8Feb42** - First service Batavia, Tjilitjap, Broome, THOMAS -*Corinna*. [There were three one-way services flown from Tjilitjap, to Broome. Eight others, one not completed, were round trips, Broome-Tjilitjap-Broome.]

Two services left Karachi, east-bound, on 8Feb42. Captains were Tapp and Gurney, both reached Calcutta that day.

Tapp had departed Karachi bound to Batavia, this turned out to be the last Empire flying boat through service.

9Feb42 – Calcutta-Akyab-Port Blair. Gurney went first, Tapp later.

10Feb42 – At dawn Gurney departs Port Blair, Tapp just arriving. Gurney completed his trip OK.

. Tapp refuelled, tried take-off, but had engine power problems, need repairs.

11Feb42 – Tapp got away from Port Blair, remained overnight at Sibolga.  
12Feb42 – Tapp to Batavia

Tapp was to return westward, but Singapore fell, and Sumatra was over-run. So Tapp-*Clifton* later took a load of passengers to Tjilitjap and on to reach Broome 18Feb42. This was the third of three one-way flights Tjilitjap-Broome. Tapp passed through Darwin 21Feb42, and flew on to Sydney.

**10Feb42** - Denny - plane not said left Sydney for Tjilitjap.

**12Feb42** - RAAF - Hampshire A18-13 flies to pick-up point on Ceram, but 13 Sqn escape party had already been intercepted by Japanese, soon (20Feb42) beheaded – murdered !!!  
15Feb42 - Hampshire flew again to the pick-up point.

**13Feb42** - Hampshire and A18-13 rescued nine of the Namlea RAAF party, pick-up at Tifu, Buru Island, and flown to Darwin.

**14Feb42** - Through route to Karachi was broken.

**15Feb42** - Singapore fell. *Clifton*, G-AFPZ became stranded in Sydney. It was leased by the RAAF 12Mar42. .... This was "commercial lease" from BOAC, direct to RAAF. When the RAAF released this plane, QEA took it over by purchase. Only then did QEA come into this plane in "ownership" basis.

**15Feb42** - When Singapore fell, ten Empire flying boats were isolated at the Australian end of the 'Horse-shoe' route.

|                    |                |                 |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Clifton</i>     | G-AFPZ         | soon A18-14     |
| <i>Coogee</i>      | A18-12         | lost Cr 27Feb42 |
| <i>Coriolanus</i>  | G-AETV         | soon VH-ABG     |
| <i>Corinthian</i>  | G-AEUF         | lost Cr 22Mar42 |
| <i>Circe</i>       | G-AETZ         | lost EA 28Feb42 |
| <i>Camilla</i>     | G-AEUB, VH-ADU | lost Cr 22Apr43 |
| <i>Coolangatta</i> | A18-13         | ex VH-ABB       |
| <i>Corinna</i>     | G-AEUC         | lost EA 3Mar42  |
| <i>Centaurus</i>   | A18-10         | lost EA 3Mar42  |
| <i>Calypso</i>     | A18-11         | lost Cr 8Aug42  |

**16Feb42** - RAAF 33 Sqn was formed, took over two Empire flying boats from 11 and 20 Sqns.  
<WBG> Two others flying then in Darwin area were probably not counted as "handed over" at that time.

**16Feb42** - Crowther-*Camilla* flew Java-Broome, the second of three one way trips to Broome.  
Return trips from Broome - Java – Broome began this day.

**Study on one-way trips Java-Broome.**

**8Feb42** - First service Batavia, Tjilitjap, Broome, THOMAS -*Corinna*. [There were three one-way services flown from Tjilitjap, to Broome. Eight others, one not completed, were round trips, Broome-Tjilitjap-Broome.]

**10Feb42** - Denny - plane not said left Sydney for Tjilitjap.

**16Feb42** - CROWTHER-*Camilla* flew Java-Broome, the second of three one way trips to Broome.  
Return trips from Broome - Java – Broome began this day.

**18Feb42** - *Camilla* arrived Darwin in the evening, from Broome. On board was Air Marshall R Williams, returning from exchange duty with the RAF.

TAPP-*Clifton* ... Batavia to Tjilitjap and on to reach Broome 18Feb42. This was the third of three one-way flights Tjilitjap-Broome.

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Tapp-*Clifton* ... Batavia to Tjilitjap and on to reach Broome 18Feb42. This was the third of three one-way flights Tjilitjap-Broome.

**19Feb42** - Ambrose flew the last service out of Batavia, via Tjilitjap to Australia. (This equates with one of the return trips from Broome, which started 16Feb42.)

**19Feb42** - Japanese first attacks at Darwin. Koch was in Darwin hospital. Crowther, Hussey and Gurney were at Darwin Hotel when the Japanese first attacked Darwin. Crowther and Hussey went to *Camilla* and flew it to Groote Eylandt, returning to Darwin that afternoon, arriving at sunset. During the night, *Camilla* was prepared and loaded for flight to Sydney, and took off some time after midnight. Koch was evacuated on this flight.

**21Feb42** -

Capt Ambrose and Purton were at the hotel at Broome, having arrived this day from Java.

*Circe*-Denny G-AETZ was at moorings in Broome harbour, crew aboard, awaiting early morning take-off for Tjilitjap.

*Corinthian*-Howard G-AEUF arrived Broome in the afternoon, from Sydney, the journey of several days being interrupted by a cyclone in Queensland and Japanese raids on Darwin. Capt L Brain arrives Broome (thought to be on this flight) to take charge of operations from Broome. .... A series of evacuation flights Tjilitjap to Broome were to be done by QEA at USAAF cost and control.

**22Feb42** - *Circe* - Denny depart Broome for Tjilatjap at 2PM.

**22Feb42** - Tapp - *Clifton* with evacuees from Singapore (latterly via Batavia, Tjilitjap & Broome) had come in to Darwin from Broome - some of the passengers were BOAC staff. QEA engineer Norm Roberts' wife evacuated from Darwin on this aircraft next day.

**23Feb42** - *Coriolanus*-Ambrose VH-ABG departed Broome for Tjilitjap.

**24Feb42** - *Corinthian*-PURTON (and HOWARD) departed Broome for Tjilatjap. AM. *Circe*-DENNY and *Coriolanus*-AMBROSE arrive back at Broome. PM.

**25Feb42** - *Circe* - DENNY departs Broome for Tjilatjap. *Corinthian* - PURTON and HOWARD arrives Broome from Tjilatjap.

**26Feb42** - *Coriolanus* - Ambrose departs Broome for Tjilatjap. *Circe* - Denny arrives Broome from Tjilatjap.

**27Feb42** - *Corinthian*-HOWARD and *Circe*-PURTON depart Broome for Tjilatjap.

Two more QEA flying boats are coming from Sydney, *Corinna* and *Camilla*. *Corinna* arrived this day. *Coriolanus*-AMBROSE arrives Broome from Tjilatjap. General Bennett was a 'stowaway' on this, some say. Pilot Ambrose says General Bennett was simply a processed passenger.

**27Feb42** - *Coogee* A18-12, ex VH-ABC, pilot Flt Lt Love, RAAF 33 Sqn, crashed during water landing at Townsville. RAAF crew killed.

[ *Clifton* was soon acquired (leased from BOAC) by the RAAF as replacement. On 4Mar42 a conference at RAAF HQ Melbourne requested another Empire fboat to replace *Coogee*, lost Townsville 27Feb42. This was agreed subject to British Air Ministry approval.]

**28Feb42** – *Coriolanus*-Denny departed Broome for Tjilatjap. He is recalled by radio. After being recalled from the flight to Tjilatjap, DENNY/AMBROSE did a search for the USAAF C-53 which was lost north of Broome 26Feb42. No result this search. DENNY will search again next day on his way to Darwin.  
*Camilla*-THOMAS-VH-ADU arrived Broome from Sydney, carrying a spare engine.  
*Corinthian*-HOWARD arrived Broome from Tjilatjap.  
*Circe*-PURTON G-AETZ is missing. Fails to arrive Broome from Tjilatjap.

**1Mar42** - *Coriolanus*-HOWARD departed Broome for Sydney, via Wyndham. At 6.30 AM 3Mar42 departed Wyndham after engine repairs, bound to Groote Eylandt. They departed just two hours ahead of the Japanese attack on Wyndham.  
*Corinthian*-DENNY departed Broome for Sydney via the coast to Darwin searching for a downed USAAF C-53, whose crew he located and picked up near Cape Londonderry [Vansittart Bay].

USAAF C-53. Callsign - VH-UGY  
This aircraft had been doing Perth - Broome shuttles, crashed 26Feb42, enroute Perth to Broome with two crew and two passengers, became lost, went way past Broome, fuel level low, force landed on a clear area of coast, Anjo Peninsula, about ten miles south-west of where Truscott airstrip was built in 1944. QEA Empire flying boat *Corinthian*-DENNY ex Broome, located and rescued the four survivors on 1Mar42, flew them on to Darwin, then to Karumba and Townsville.  
Suggestions are that Capt Brain of QEA believed radio calls from and related to this downed aircraft by US aircraft caused the Japanese to reconnaissance and then raid Broome.

**1Mar42** – *Corinna* – G-AEUC arrives Broome from Sydney, via Darwin.  
RAAF *Centaurus*-F/Lt CALDWELL-A18-10 (ex G-ADUT) (both aircraft and pilot are ex QEA) arrived Broome from Darwin. They were beginning an evacuation mission to Koepang, and chose to moor at Broome, considering it safer than Darwin.

**2Mar42** – *Corinna* – THOMAS and AMBROSE depart Broome on a ten hour search for *Circe*-PURTON. They returned to Broome, search was unsuccessful.  
*Camilla* – SIMS departed Broome, did a search for *Koolama*, to Wyndham for overnight, found *Koolama* there ! Prior to reaching Wyndham, *Koolama* had put 40 people ashore in Drysdale area, and they were walking toward the Drysdale mission. Next day, Sims returns to the area, finds the walking party, picks up 24 of 40 of them.

There were ten trips from Tjilatjap to Broome, [nine arrivals]; these comprised three services before the seven shuttles Broome-Tjilatjap-Broome, one of which was not completed when *Circe*-PURTON was lost. Another shuttle started, but was recalled, is not counted.

**3Mar42** – 9am approximately. Japanese aircraft attack Broome.  
*Corinna* G-AEUC was attacked and sunk, was being refueled for flight to Sydney. Pilot AMBROSE and other crew/passengers were on the wharf during the attacks, were not harmed.  
*Centaurus* A18-10 was destroyed by enemy action on Broome Harbour. Pilot is Capt Keith Caldwell, now RAAF, formerly a QEA pilot. [A18-10 might well have been still on strength of 11 Sqn - most sources say only two Empire flying boats were handed initially to 33 Sqn.]  
*Camilla* - SIMS returns to Broome from Wyndham about one hour after the Broome attack. Cannot proceed without re-fuelling; shelters in a creek to do this, then departs to Port Hedland. Capt AMBROSE helped pump fuel. *Camilla* had departed Wyndham prior to the attacks there, flew inland between the two places while both were under attack. After refuelling at Broome, *Camilla*-Sims flew to Port Hedland with wounded and refugees.

**4Mar42** - *Camilla*-SIMS arrived back at Broome from Port Hedland at 6.15am. Loaded up, and departed for Port Hedland at 7.10am. *Camilla* is allowed to proceed to Perth, instead of returning to Broome as planned.

**7Mar42** - *Camilla* - SIMS and THOMAS arrived Broome late afternoon. Loaded the last of QEA staff [including Brain] and equipment and took off for Port Hedland, arriving 7.30pm, same pilots.

**8Mar42** - *Camilla* departs Port Hedland, arrives Perth. Is unloaded and re-fuelled.

**11Mar42** - *Camilla* - THOMAS makes one final flight Perth to Pt Hedland with an emergency cargo of dynamite for demolition purposes.

*Camilla*, no longer airworthy for regular work, was ferried back to Sydney [arrived 18Mar42] via Albany, Adelaide and Geelong. SIMS and THOMAS flying.

**22Mar42** - *Corinthian*-AMBROSE [ and TAPP] G-AEUF flew from Brisbane to Darwin carrying some of US 102 AA Batt.. Hit debris during landing, aircraft sunk, AMBROSE five months in hospital.

**Mar42** - *Clifton*, leased from BOAC to RAAF as A18-14 ..... This is the fifth and last Empire Flying Boat transfer to the RAAF. It went to the RAAF ex G-AFPZ, and when released from the RAAF 26Jun43, was bought by QEA on 1Jul43 and registered as VH-ACD.

On 14Mar42, F Lt Caldwell [quickly to Sydney after the loss of A18-10 at Broome 3Mar42] flew *Clifton* A18-14 to her new home at 33 Sqn.

*Clifton* was an S33 model, built for the Atlantic service. It had a wider chine to carry extra weight of fuel, engines still same as the others.

**Mid42** -- Empire flying boats still surviving were : ---

|      |                    |         |                   |
|------|--------------------|---------|-------------------|
| QEA  | <i>Camilla</i>     | G-AEUB, | soon VH-ADU       |
| "    | <i>Coriolanus</i>  | G-AETV, | soon VH-ABG       |
| RAAF | <i>Calypso</i>     | A18-11  | soon lost, Aug42. |
| "    | <i>Coolangatta</i> | A18-13  |                   |
| "    | <i>Clifton</i>     | A18-14  |                   |

**Aug42** - Two swaps took place - probably done to enable simpler paper work. The QEA owned planes, *Carpentaria* and *Coee*, were isolated on the African side of Singapore when the Horse Shoe Route was broken, while BOAC owned *Camilla* and *Coriolanus* were at the Australian end.

- 1) VH-ABA *Carpentaria* To BOAC as G-AFBJ, swap for  
VH-ADU *Camilla* Ex BOAC, ex G-AEUB
- 2) VH-ABF *Coee* To BOAC as G-AFBL, swap for  
VH-ABG *Coriolanus* Ex BOAC, ex G-AETV.

**08Aug42** - *Calypso* A18-11, ex G-AEUA, and then by virtue of a 'swap', ex QEA to RAAF, sank near Daru, New Guinea, following damage sustained in a heavy seas landing for rescue of survivors of torpedoed steamship Mamuta. F Lt Mather was pilot of *Calypso*. The crew in two life rafts made landfall at Goaribari Island, and reached safety at Kikori.

**13Apr43** - A small force of Japanese were suspected to have landed on Cape York Peninsula, vicinity of Arakun. On this day QEA flying boat *Camilla* flew a company of troops from Cairns to investigate.

**22Apr43** - *Camilla*, VH-ADU was lost during a bad weather emergency landing on open sea near Port Moresby. Captain KOCH survived, but eleven passengers and two crew were lost. This was the second such experience for KOCH. *Camilla* that day had flown from Townsville, carrying four crew and 27 passengers bound to Port Moresby.

On the same day, *Coriolanus* pilot Ambrose departed Port Moresby for Townsville.

**By end Jul43** - Both remaining RAAF Empire flying boats had been released.

|             |        |                  |                           |
|-------------|--------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Clifton     | A18-14 | released 26Jun43 | Bought by QEA as VH-ACD   |
| Coolangatta | A18-13 | released 29Jul43 | Returned to QEA as VH-ABB |

**End Jul43** - *Clifton* was no sooner back in QEA service when it flew from Townsville to Horn Island for ten flights [on consecutive days] to Tannemerah, on the Digul River in Dutch New Guinea. Pilot was Hussey. Similar troop movements had previously been done by RAAF 41 Sqn. Only nine trips were done - the hull was holed, *Clifton* was flown to Sydney for repair.

**18Jan44** - *Clifton* VH-ACD, pilots Hussey and Ashley was lost during a training landing accident at Rose Bay, Sydney. Brought ashore, damaged now by salt water, was converted to components.

**11Oct44** - *Coolangatta* VH-ABB, pilots Brain and Caldwell was lost during mechanical trouble emergency landing at Rose Bay, Sydney.

This left *Coriolanus*, which from mid 1942 had done flights from Sydney to Darwin and New Caledonia for a couple of months, and then from about Oct42, from Townsville to Port Moresby and other NG ports.

Alone, [of those in Australia] it survived the war years, and ceased flying at the end of 1947, having about 20,000 airborne hours.

It was sold and broken up in 1948.

Fin.