

SPECIAL POINTS
OF INTEREST:

- The Pacific Fleet in New Zealand



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The Pacific Fleet in New Zealand *by Graham Orphan*

This story does not happen to be about an armada of US warships but rather, about a humble little biplane that made its home at Omaka Airfield, Blenheim, New Zealand in 1938 - and how that story repeated itself over 60 years later!



Courtesy - Craig P Justo

The Fleet biplane series originally appeared in Rhode Island, the name coming from company founder Reuben Fleet, a successful property investor and former U.S. Air Service pilot. Fleet did not design the aircraft, instead engaging a young engineer named Virginius Clark, not so well known as an aircraft designer, but certainly for the very successful 'Clark Y' airfoil that was to become common throughout the world on machines like the Piper Cub. Fleet's company, the Consolidated Aircraft Corporation would go on to give the world the B-24 Liberator bomber and the PBY-5 Catalina flying boat. In time, the construction of lighter machines saw that activity split off to continue under another name, Fleet Aircraft Inc in 1929.

A range of models of the two seat biplane, were built for both civilian and military markets and sold all around the world. Some models built for the US military were used for the first 'dirigible hook up' experiments in which biplanes could operate to and from airborne airships, launching when needed to carry out scouting flights in a new locality, and returning to the ship. It was envisaged that this would form the beginning of the airborne aircraft carrier concept and would have continued had problems with the airship program not put an end to that initiative.

By 1935, military orders for Fleet biplanes had seen sales to Argentina, Brazil, China, Columbia, Cuba, Guatamala, Hong Kong, Japan, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Russia, Siam, Spain and Turkey!

Continued page 3



Courtesy - Craig P Justo



Christmas and New Year 2009



Christmas is a time when we spend time with family and look back at the year that was. As another year draws to a close, for QVAG AFM Inc this last year has been one of adjustment with a new management **committee**, catching up on things that needed to be done, and the development of new ideas for the future. In 2010 there are challenges to meet and with a strong management committee the way forward will be rewarding. From the management committee, have a safe and happy holiday period.



AAA of A and QVAG "Toy-Run" 2009!

Sunday 29 November was set down for the annual Antique Aeroplane Association of Australia and Queensland Vintage Aeroplane Group's "Toy-Run" which has for the past two years, been convened at Caboolture Airfield. With the full support of the Caboolture Aero Club, the event went ahead as planned and in lieu of the donation of a Toy for distribution to underprivileged children, donations were received for a commendable voluntary cause - "Angel Flight"! But due to the challenging weather conditions that prevailed on the day, the number of aircraft in attendance was down on last year's event. It was extremely hot, windy and the downpour of rain that was delivered to the Airfield courtesy of a seasonal storm the previous afternoon, humidity was sitting at an uncomfortable 90%.



Courtesy - Craig P Justo



Courtesy - Craig P Justo

But for those folks who braved the conditions to attend the event, they were treated to a goodly measure of genial hospitality and the camaraderie as shared by the majority of the aviation community! In the matter of the aircraft in attendance, due the number of aircraft that reside on Caboolture Airfield, as one might assume, they outnumbered the visitors. Owners of several aircraft, extricated their treasures from the hangars and in most instances, they were flown on the day. Resident Tigers and Chipmunks were joined by the DH-84 Dragon, Aeritalia AM-3C Bosbok, Stinson L-5 Sentinel and a host of Ultralights and Homebuilts to provide a wide variety of aircraft.

Aircraft of note to fly in for the event were the Genairco Moth, Cessna 140, Spacewalker (radial engine powered) and Antonov AN-2. It was great to see the latter back up and running after a long period of inactivity! Now owned by the Saario Brothers, this was its first trip away from its Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield base in nearly two years. As most Members would know, this machine was formerly owned and operated by our late Member, Barry Hempel! For that express reason, it is especially pleasing to see this machine flying once again as it is a worthy tribute to Barry's memory!



Courtesy - Craig P Justo



Courtesy - Craig P Justo

Caboolture Airfield is a hive of activity over most weekends and the comings and goings of aircraft is always a great sight to take in and enjoy. Sunday was no different and although the actual numbers of aircraft to fly in to the event were down, the movements on the Airfield were such that few would have noticed! As with all events of this nature, there is a huge amount of work that goes into putting it together and carrying it through and last Sunday's event was no different. Working behind the scenes to ensure that it was conducted in a safe and enjoyable manner was Ray Vuillermin, John

Dawson, Matt and Lesleigh Fisher, Don and Sandra Carroll and the many other volunteers who gave of their time and various talents on the day.

Of particular note, the greater majority of the folks who either flew in to the event, extracted their aircraft from hangars for static display or simply drove in to assist where necessary and enjoy the day were QVAG Members. Whilst many are now all but consumed with the lead in to the "Festive Season", it was especially pleasing to see that the Spirit of Aviation remains in the minds of folks who enjoy all of the facets of recreational aviation!

CRAIG P JUSTO - DECEMBER 2009

President's Message

Thank you all for your support at the Annual General Meeting. I look forward to working with the Management Committee and to meeting with you again in the new year. The Christmas function was enjoyed by 38 members and friends who had a delicious meal of ham, turkey and salads followed by a refreshing trifle. Thank you to Robyn and the many helpers who made the night a success.

At the Management Committee meeting on 5 December the following dates have been set aside for breakfast fly-ins in 2010:

Sunday 14 February; Sunday 18 April; Sunday 27 June; FOF 28-29 August; Sunday 24 October; 4-5 December – Christmas Party.

Also make a note in your diary for the Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield Association's "All-In" Fly-In to be held on 22 May, 2010 at Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield.

More information on themes for the breakfast fly-ins will be available in the new year. Have a safe and happy holiday break. Best wishes and see you at Watts Bridge (or elsewhere). To all of you - keep safe.

Kind regards - Frank

The Pacific Fleet in New Zealand *continued from page 1*

Unfortunately, Fleet had been experiencing difficulties with the U.S. export system to foreign countries (how unusual for an American aircraft supplier!) and so had taken the initiative to move the production to Canada. Later, license production was also undertaken in Romania where the local model was fitted with a license built copy of the DH Gipsy Major engine in place of the usual Warner or Kinner radial.

THE RETURN OF THE PACIFIC FLEET

One area of the planet which seems to have largely evaded the presence of Fleet biplanes is Australasia. Not a single Fleet had been seen in Australia while a solitary Fleet 7b made its way to New Zealand. That aircraft, c/n 126 became ZK-AGC in 1937 and as a new aeroplane, was registered to the Marlborough Aero Club which operated the aircraft from its base, Omaka Airfield, Blenheim. Alas the only Fleet to operate in the South Pacific led a short life as it was destroyed in an accident in May, 1938 when it was just months old. The crash report stated that the aircraft "Struck a haystack while night flying". From this we can deduce that either the aircraft was flying very low or it encountered a very tall haystack. Further inquiries indicated that it did in fact attempt to fly between two haystacks, severing the wings while leaving the fuselage largely intact. Further research showed the two haystacks to be about a meter apart, so the intent of the pilot at the time remains a mystery! The occupants were evidently uninjured and they brought the damaged aircraft home to Omaka on the back of a truck several days after the incident. (One can only wonder at the reception they would have received if the current Marlborough Aero Club CFI had been there to greet them. Kevin Wilkey is known for being very direct in his communications with wayward aviators!!). Alas the poor crumpled Fleet was never rebuilt before the airfield was taken over for military use during WW-II and of course, after that conflict ended, it was raining cheap yellow Tiger Moths for years so who would have bothered rebuilding a very broken old biplane with one piece upper spars!

Several years ago I had foolishly sold our beloved Tiger Moth ZK-BSN which I'd restored during the 1990's and it wasn't long before I realized it was not so easy living without an open biplane. Rather than restore another Tiger I decided to look at other options. My wife Jane suggested that because of the brief history of the Fleet at Omaka, we should explore that aircraft as an option. The more I learned about Fleets, the more interested I be-

came in this type and eventually began contacting Fleet owners about the possibility of their aircraft being for sale. In March 2004, Jane and I headed for Phoenix, Arizona where we met long time Fleet owners Sam and Myra Johnson and while there, we bought their dear old Fleet. It almost seemed a crime to take the aeroplane away from this lovely couple but as Sam said, they'd had a lot of fun in it over a decade and a half and they'd decided it was time to look for something different. They also didn't mind the Fleet going to New Zealand as they liked the sentiment behind replacing Omaka's original Fleet. After several days we had the aircraft dismantled, packed and on its way to New Zealand to become only the second ever 'Pacific Fleet', and one based at exactly the same airfield as its earlier sibling.

After flying the Fleet for a few years (but never regularly enough) we decided to make an honest aeroplane out of her and retire her US registration in favour of New Zealand registration. This process was surprisingly involved considering that the aircraft was already flying here. Jay McIntyre, known to many QVAG members who have visited Omaka or met him at FoF a few years ago, effected the transition, installing the new ELT and carrying out a variety of smaller tasks. When time came to select registration, we thought it would be really nice to be able to reclaim the original Omaka Fleet call-sign, ZK-AGC. NZCAA would not normally release a period

registration to another aircraft however, sympathising with our reasoning, stated that if we were able to produce a letter from the original owner stating that the aircraft was definitely destroyed and would not be coming back, then we could have the call-sign! Well the original owner was the Marlborough Aero Club and Jay was the President at the time. We'd both researched the original ZK-AGC sufficiently to know that it was never coming back so the letter was generated and the approval came through! The upshot was that there had only ever been two Fleet biplanes in Australasia, both of them based the entire time of their down under careers at Omaka, and both carrying ZK-AGC - but with a nearly seven decade gap in between operations!

Continued page 4



Courtesy Graham Orphan



Courtesy Craig P Justo

The Pacific Fleet in New Zealand *continued from page 3*

Post script. QVAG members Craig Justo and Shane Winter had both enjoyed a 'Fleeting glimpse' from the cockpit of ZK-AGC during the lead up to 'Classic Fighters' events at Omaka and one of my favourite images of the aircraft was shot by Craig with Shane beaming from the rear seat. Omaka's claim to being the only home for Fleet biplanes in the Antipodes came to an end during 2007 when good friend Mal Shipton from Southern Queensland decided that he too should own a Fleet. He bought a Model 1 in the USA and shipped it to Redcliffe Airfield, north of Brisbane. I finally got to see Mal's aeroplane in August 2008 at FoF Watts Bridge and I realised when he arrived that it was the first time I'd ever seen a Fleet biplane in the air, having only ever seen mine from within. Also at that event were Alistair and Frances Matthews, also based in Blenheim. Alistair was subsequently rated on ZK-AGC so thinking back, there is a nice sense of 'Fleet club' happening there!

Sadly, ZK-AGC is soon to be placed - very reluctantly - on the market as we have acquired another aircraft to take her place in the hangar. Naturally we'd love to see her stay at Omaka so we'll be giving preference to Omaka based enthusiasts who might like to see this old girl stay in the neighbourhood. In the meantime, she is continuing to provide great pleasure to this geographically challenged Queenslander!

Graham Orphan



Courtesy - Craig P Justo



Courtesy - Craig P Justo

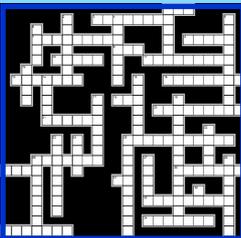


Courtesy - Craig P Justo

From the Editor

Hi everyone. As another year draws to a close, we are all making plans for the holiday season, who we are going to see and what will be on that all important menu. For some, Christmas is just another day and spend time isolated from family and friends for a variety of reasons. It is timely to remember those less fortunate and if you can help someone then find your Christmas spirit and make the time to do so.

This edition of AVAN has some interesting stories and a crossword to keep you busy over Christmas.



The first person to return a completed and correct crossword to me will receive a token of appreciation for their effort. The crossword answers will be published in the next edition of AVAN.

The *Barefoot to Boeings* story by Brian Crane has been withheld for the time being while I work on the project with Brian. My condolences to Brian for the recent loss of his wife of 56 years, Elsie, who passed away on 20 November.

Dedicated to the airworthy preservation of Australia's historic aircraft

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Remember, if I hear you are or have done something special, interesting, or just committing aviation, just say yes I'll share what I'm up to! AVAN needs your input! Give me a call on 0409 640 781.

Safe flying to you all.



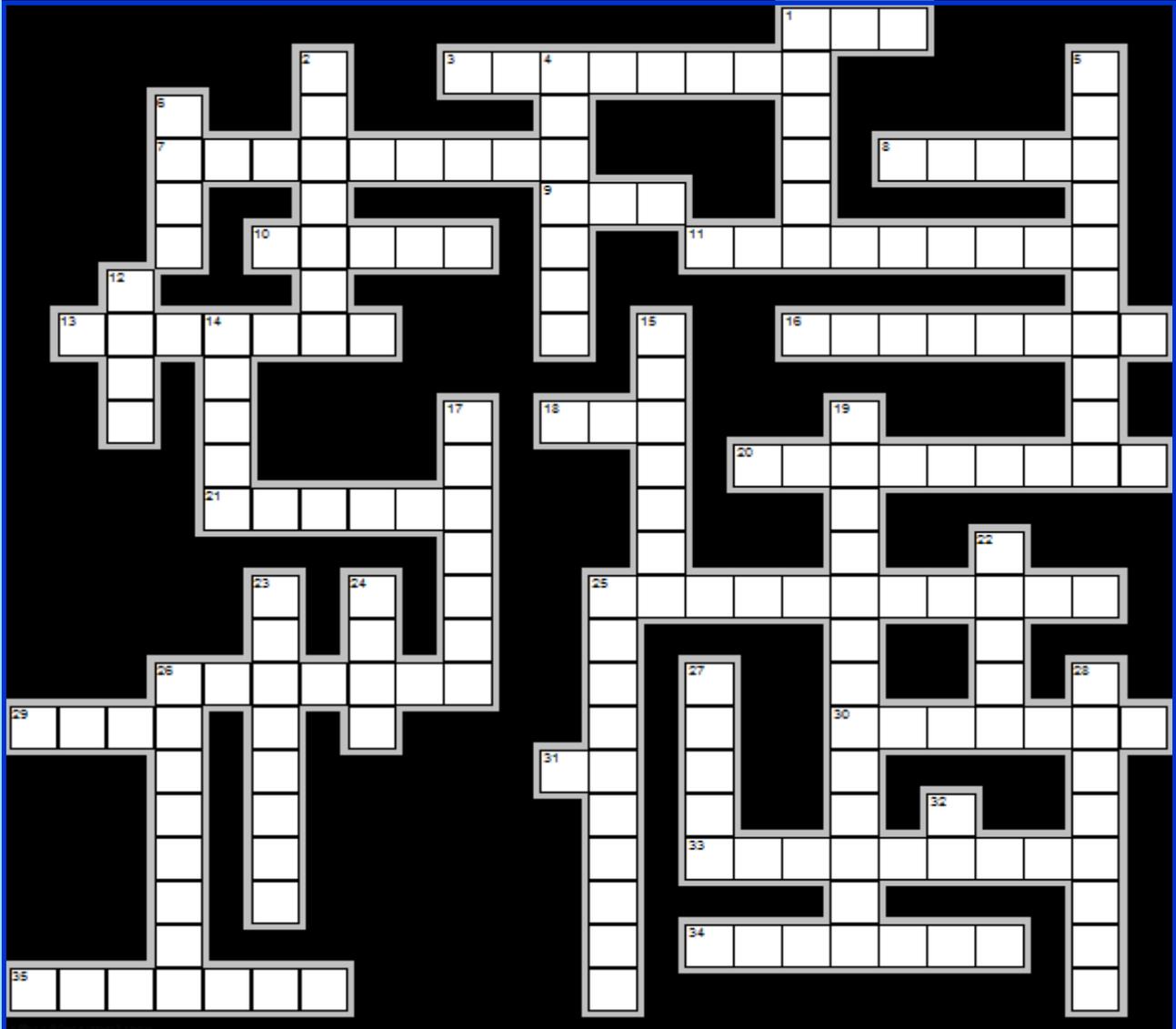
Queensland Vintage Aeroplane Group & Australian Flying Museum

Dedicated to the Airworthy Preservation of Australia's Historic Aircraft



Aviation Crosswords - No 1 by Karen Guest

Aviation Crosswords is a new section in AVAN. The first person to return a completed and correct crossword to me will receive a token of appreciation for their effort. The crossword answers will be published in the next edition of AVAN. So come on everyone and join in the fun. Note: The answers have been developed to the best of my ability—please be patient.



Across

1. Born to do this.
3. It was a bit of everything.
7. It accounted for more victories over enemy aircraft than all other air and ground forces combined during the Battle of Britain.
8. Fuel.
9. The first female pilot to fly alone from Britain to Australia.
10. A bi plane has four of these.
11. This was a unique WWII fighter with the engine behind the pilot.
13. The second British jet to enter service but arrived too late to see action in WWII.
16. It is a body.
18. He flew with Kingsford-Smith on the first trans Pacific flight from the USA to Australia.
20. This aircraft undertook the first flight of a mass produced four engine bomber.
21. A USA trainer aircraft
25. This unusual wing arrangement made it one of the best performing single engine post WWI light aircraft.
26. A wandering man.
29. On a clear day the sky is this.
30. Known as the whistling death.
31. The spitfire was Great Britain's best fighter plane in this world war.
33. Aircraft height indicator.
34. To rebuild a fantastic flying machine.
35. Sound.

Down clues on Page 11





The “Ghosts” of Guadalcanal! by Craig P Justo

In the nineties, I travelled to Guadalcanal on several occasions and this was via commercial jet aircraft. The landings were effected at Henderson Field, the International “gateway” to the Solomon Islands. When you emerged from the air conditioned “aluminium tube” in which you had just spent the last three hours or so and stepped onto the tarmac, the first thing that got your attention was the oppressive heat and stifling humidity. It didn’t matter what time of the year that you arrived, the conditions were the same yet you were now in the tropics proper and thus, what else would you expect? Besides, a visit to the Honiara Yacht Club at Point Cruz was always on the agenda for the afternoon/evening session! It was always a pleasure to sit there, looking out over Iron Bottom Sound, take in the balmy breeze that was coming off the water and enjoy the beverage of your choice that you consumed to effect some measure of rehydration!

Honiara is the capital of the Solomon Islands and depending on the state of the road that linked Henderson Airfield to Honiara, the trip in a vehicle could vary from twenty minutes to an hour! I kid you not, back then, there were no traffic rules as such, “might was right” and if you didn’t get out of the way of a truck, your “right” was “wrong”! And whilst wending your way through the traffic, if your vehicle went into a “pothole”, then there was a very strong chance that it wouldn’t emerge! But you need to understand, although just a mere three hours flying time from Brisbane, when you stepped off that aircraft, you stepped into a “third world” country! Although the roads were marginal and the dwellings and city buildings weren’t all that flash by Australian standards, it was nevertheless a great place to visit – especially for someone like me who has a compelling interest in the World War Two Pacific Campaign.

A BRIEF HISTORY!

Guadalcanal! Between 07 August, 1942 and 09 February, 1943, this previously obscure Island made world headlines due to one of the most fiercely contested campaigns of the Pacific War. Fought on the ground, at sea and in the air, this campaign constituted a series of ongoing battles and it was the first major offensive launched by Allied forces against the Japanese Empire. At that time, Guadalcanal became synonymous with and pivotal to the turning of the tide against the Imperial Japanese forces.

Those battles were fought around maps that used existing names such as Mount Austen, Kokumbona, Lunga River, Matanikau River etc., whilst after the battles commenced, the ad-lib naming of hills, ridges and specific areas became common place. In many instances, those names on Field Maps were changed to be extremely descriptive due to the high number of casualties that were suffered in those places – “Bloody Ridge” (nowadays known as Edson’s Ridge – named after U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel Merrit A Edson who commanded the Marine Corps units in that area), “Coffin Corner”- nicknamed by a US Marine after a battle that ended with dead Japanese stacked in the “corner” of the Marines defensive line and “Hell’s Point” (at the mouth of the Tenaru River)! Whereas those were amongst the more macabre, others were more benign such as the Gifu, the Galloping Horse, the Seahorse, Alligator Creek and Red Beach.

All of those places are in the immediate vicinity of Henderson Field and it was the importance attached to the control of the Airfield that made it the prime objective of the battles. Known as Lunga Point (“Runga Point” to the Japanese) and code named “RXI”, the site for the Airfield was surveyed by the Japanese in early May, 1942. With a plan to base forty-five fighters and sixty bombers on the Airfield, 500 Japanese military personnel plus 2,500 Korean labourers that they had at their “disposal” began the construction in July. Their activities were observed by an Australian coast-watcher, Martin Clemens, who closely monitored and reported their progress from his stand off position on Gold Ridge.

Alarmed by his reports and realising that when it became operational, this would allow land based Japanese aircraft to threaten the shipping lanes to Australia, New Zealand and the eastern flanks of Bougainville and New Guinea, the Americans set about planning the invasion of Guadalcanal with the sole purpose being to capture the Airfield.

The Marines 1st. Division landed at Red Beach and subsequently captured the Airfield in an assault that was virtually unopposed, as the Japanese and Koreans had fled into the surrounding hills. As the Airfield was only half complete, the US Navy’s 6th. Naval Construction Battalion (Seabees) completed the work and the Airfield was named in honour of Major Lofton Henderson who had been killed in action during the battle of Midway.

Continued page 7

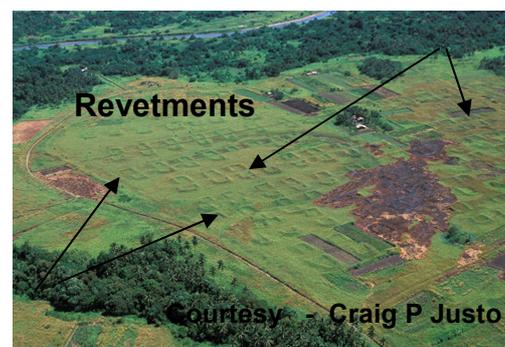




The “Ghosts” of Guadalcanal ... *continued from page 6*

On 20 August, a US Navy PBV Catalina amphibian became the first aircraft to land on the newly completed Airfield and just two days later, the first of the fighters arrived – those being five Bell P-400 Airacobras from the USAAF's 44th Fighter Squadron. This token force was soon bolstered through the subsequent arrival of nineteen Grumman F4F-4 Wildcat fighters of the US Navy's VF-5 (arrived September 1942) and twelve Douglas SBD-3 Dauntless dive-bombers of the US Marine Corp's VMTB-132 (arrived in October 1942). Collectively, these aircraft initially formed what was soon to be referred to as the “Cactus Air Force” (“Cactus” being the code name allocated to the Guadalcanal campaign).

Paralleling the construction of Henderson Field, the Seabees created another Airfield that would be referred to as “Fighter Strip One”. Also known as “Fighter 1”, Lunga Field and “The Cow Pasture”, this single grass strip runway, hardstands and **revetments** was operational in September 1942 and by February 1943, the runway had been extended to 4,000 feet. Although plagued with drainage problems, it allowed Allied aircraft to operate when the runways at Henderson were disabled through bombardment or bombing. “Fighter Strip One” became the primary base for USMC and USN aircraft and due its close proximity to Henderson Field, they were interconnected by a taxiway.



Located two miles west of Henderson, Fighter Strip 2 (also known as Kukum Field) was also established and it became operational on 12 February, 1943 when twelve Grumman F4F-4 Wildcats from the US Marine Corp's VFM-124 landed. After the War, “Fighter 2” became the Solomon Island's main Airport and this prevailed until 1969 when Henderson was reactivated. “Fighter 2” is now the site of the Honiara Golf Club and an industrial complex. The Seabees also constructed several additional strips and these were Fighter Strip 3 which was established to the East of the Ilu River, the Crash Strip (also known as the “Grassy Strip”) which was adjacent to Henderson Field and used only in emergencies, Carney Field (also known as “Bomber 2”) and then Koli Field (also known as “Bomber 3”).

But the Japanese were desperate to recapture Henderson Field and it was that objective on which they concentrated their assaults. On 19 August, the remaining Japanese on Guadalcanal were reinforced by the Imperial Japanese Army's 17th Army and with their headquarters established at Kokumbona and with strong points on Mount Austen and Edson's Ridge, the battles commenced in earnest. Over the next six months, the various battles raged and the Japanese Army subjected Henderson Field and its defenders to aerial and naval bombardments that combined with suicidal front-on assaults. Although resupplied and reinforced by the Japanese ships that became known as the “Tokyo Express”, the Japanese never regained possession of Henderson Field. By 09 February, 1943, the Japanese had completed the withdrawal of their surviving forces from Guadalcanal.

The Guadalcanal campaign was finally over but for the next two years it remained central to the push to remove the Japanese invaders from the South Pacific areas (New Guinea, Bougainville etc.). With the immediate threat to the American occupation of Henderson Field nullified, additional Squadrons from the US Navy, US Marine Corp and US Army Air Force became based there and this saw a mix of aircraft types conducting operations from the Airfield. Wildcats, Corsairs, Lightnings, Airacobras, Hellcats, Avengers, Dauntless', Invaders and Mitchells were complimented by Kittyhawks, Hudsons and Venturas of the Royal New Zealand Air Force. Of note, it was from Henderson Field that the USAAF launched its highly successful mission to intercept and shoot down Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's Mitsubishi G4M “Betty” bomber. On 18 April, 1943, eighteen Lockheed P-38G Lightning fighters from the USAAF's 339th Fighter Squadron launched from Henderson Field to effect that mission.

THE RELICS

As one might imagine, due to the very nature of the conflict, besides the obscene loss of life, losses of equipment during that campaign were manifold and remnants remain littered throughout the main areas of battle. To this very day, it is still possible to walk over those areas and due monsoonal rains and the subsequent erosion, there is a strong chance that you will come across the decaying remains and/or components of personal equipment issues such as rifles, bayonets, mess kit, canteens etc. And in the extreme, live rounds of ordnance such as Artillery Rounds, Aerial bombs, Mortar rounds, Hand Grenades, Bullets and a range of other munitions. In the matter of these deadly legacies of the conflict, over many years detachments of Australian Army personnel have worked in conjunction with the Solomon Islands Constabulary to remove and destroy tonnes of live ordnance but still, much remains!

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The “Ghosts” of Guadalcanal ... *continued from page 7*

But as with all areas where battles raged, straight after the Pacific War was over, the scrappers moved in and methodically and indiscriminately removed all of the abandoned equipment that was easily accessible. Those relics were melted down (usually at a nearby site) and thus disappeared forever! However, in many instances where artefacts from those battles were harder to recover, they were left to rot and thankfully, some have subsequently been recovered and displayed.

One of the persons at the forefront of those activities was the late Fred Kona, a Malaitan native who with the help of relatives and neighbours recovered Aircraft, Field Guns and many other abandoned items from the bush and the water. Establishing his Museum at Vilu, to the West of Honiara, by 1975 he had amassed an impressive collection of equipment and amongst the aircraft were the following:

A Grumman F4F-4 Wildcat (Identified as US Navy BuAer # 012068) that had been recovered from the Tasimboko area,



a Chance Vought F4U-1 Corsair (Identity unknown),



a Lockheed P-38 Lightning (Identity unknown)



and a Douglas SBD-3 Dauntless (Identity unknown).



Continued page 9





The “Ghosts” of Guadalcanal ... *continued from page 8*

Although damaged and displayed outside where exposure to the elements continues to cause further deterioration, they are nevertheless historic artefacts of the War. And sadly, the Vilu Museum is the only real “Museum” on Guadalcanal to be purposely set-up to display these priceless relics.

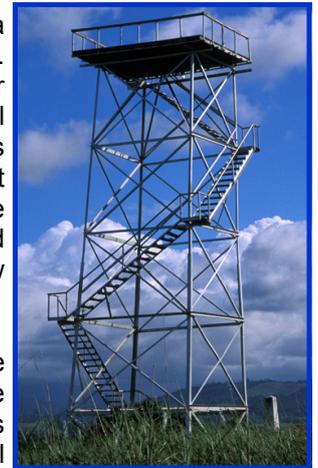
But other relics exist and they too are fairly easy to access. To name a few but not all, there are the substantial remains of a Bell P-400 Airacobra on display at the Betikama School on the outskirts of Honiara.



Identified as serial # BW157, this machine was originally intended to be a part of the Lend/Lease program that would have seen it delivered to the Royal Air Force (RAF) however, at the outbreak of the war with Japan, it was diverted to the United States Army Air Force and assigned to the 67th Pursuit Squadron based in New Caledonia. Now purportedly bearing the USAAF serial number 40-6662 (which is not a valid serial number), it was flown to [Henderson Field](#). At some point, it was damaged and the fuselage only was abandoned and subsequently buried near the Airfield. Exhumed in the mid 1970's, it was taken to the [Betikama School](#) and mated with a set of P-39N wings for display purposes. The remains of BW157 includes an intact center fuselage, wings and the Allison engine and tail grouping. Except for the relatively intact remains of aircraft that lie in the waters off Guadalcanal, those as mentioned above are the only easily accessible aircraft remains to be seen on Guadalcanal.

But there are other aviation related sites that are worthy of a visit as they still maintain a link with the conflict. Not the least of these is Henderson Field and its environs. Henderson Field remains as a stark reminder of the battles over which it was fought for and one major artifact remains, that being the control tower. This tower is not the original as it was of timber construction and replaced within twelve months of its completion. Its replacement, a four-tiered structure of metal beams was constructed in 1943 and is that which remains standing to this day. In 1995, it was refurbished – ironically by a Japanese company! And if you are adventurous, you can visit the southern side of the Airfield and view the revetments and concrete pads that remain, although the last time that I saw them, they were covered in long thick grass. Nature takes back what nature gives!

In speaking of long grass, in the majority of the areas where the battles took place, the grass and scrub has covered those areas. This has served to hide from view many of the relics that remain. As an example, during my visit to Henderson Airfield in 1997, I was walking through fairly long grass to get to the Control Tower when I stumbled and fell over.



After recovering a standing position, I then saw the item that had caused me to stumble, that being a length of tail hook that had obviously been removed from a Carrier borne aircraft and subsequently discarded. Whereas I was tempted to pick-up the item and bring it home, I resisted and thus in all probability, that tail hook remains in situ today!

In the matter of the supporting photography, the majority of this was generated at the behest of Solomon Airlines, which at the time was keen to promote tourism to the Solomon's and especially, the former battlefields. That this promotion never occurred was disappointing yet the plus for me is that I did retain the images and they bring back fond memories of the times that I spent on Guadalcanal with the “Ghosts”!

FOOTNOTE:

In the next Issue of AVAN, part two of my rambling musings will detail some of the non-aviation related artefacts (Vehicles, Ships, Field pieces etc.) that remain on Guadalcanal.

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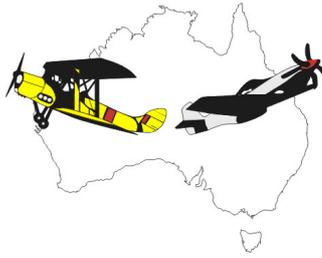
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Dedicated to the Airworthy Preservation of Australia's Historic Aircraft

Aviation Crosswords - No 1 *continued from page 5*

Down

1. The manufacturer of this aircraft was one of the earliest WW1 fighters.
2. A single engine operational jump jet attack aircraft.
4. This bomber has radar absorbent coating.
5. Most renowned American fighter of WWII.
6. An exhibit based in the air.
12. Australian air safety advisors.
14. An airman.
15. The Harrier Jet is also known as this.
17. This person completed the first solo flight from England to Australia
19. He built gliders as a teenager before WWI.
22. It is special.
23. A real fire breather.
24. A tiger in the air.
25. This was the first aircraft to ever land on a moving ship.
26. The Vampire was the first jet aircraft to land on an aircraft carrier in what month in 1945.
27. Airshow in New Zealand.
28. The manufacturer of the aircraft known as the ugly duckling of flying boats.
32. A German bomber.

In the next edition of AVAN...

The next issue of AVAN will cover the following topics and more:

- Full QVAG AFM Inc Calendar of Events
- Aviation Crosswords No 1—answers and winner
- Aviation Crosswords No 2
- Guadalcanal continued.
- For sale / wanted aviation items
- And more!

If you would like to submit an article, please give me a call on 0409 640 781.

Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield Association's "All-In" Fly-In

Date: 22 May, 2010
Venue: Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield, Queensland
Contact: **Richard Faint**
Mobile: 0412 317 753
Email: richard@auav.org
John Innes
Mobile: 0417 643 610

Membership Matters

There are still some members who have not paid their membership fees. Please bring your membership fees up to date for the future of QVAG AFM Inc. If you are not sure whether you are up to date send an email to info@qvag.org.au.

If you know someone who wants to join please refer them to the QVAG website (www.qvag.org.au) for membership information.

"Support your group by paying your membership"

*"New members
makes our
Group stronger"*

