

Queensland Warplane and Vintage Aircraft News



Front Cover Photo

Pilatus Porter PT6 From the Australian Army Museum of Aviation at Oakey. On this occasion, the aircraft was visiting Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield in the 1990's to attend one of QVAG's Festival of Flight Fly-ins.

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QWVAA Facebook URL: <https://www.facebook.com/Queensland-Vintage-Aeroplane-Group-Inc-160487164099644/posts/>

QWVAA Web Site: <http://qvag.org/index.html>

A Message from the Editor

Well I had to stand down at some stage and I picked this as being the correct time to pass over the reins to another. I am aware that good secession planning and an orderly transition to what I needed to do.

I have been in this situation before. Back in the early 1990's I noticed that Shane Winter had the capacity to make a good QVAG President and I encouraged Shane to come on the committee. Subsequently Shane became the longest serving and a very popular QVAG President and set the bar very high for all those who followed.

I had been President this time for about three years. Again I thought it's time to pass on the President's role to another. I had been eyeing off Gill for the role since I first attended Red Thunder and noticed what an exciting and well run event it was subsequently I decided that Gill had the necessary characteristics to be a QVAG President.

I will still be on the committee as Immediate Past President and Journal Editor. I see this journal as one of the vital factors that hold the group together. We are a group that covers a very wide geographical spread, not just a Watts Base centric group. I know that that geographical spread is set to expand.

I would like to thank all those who served on the committee at some point whilst I was president. I wish Gill a great future heading up our group.

President's Corner

Welcome to the April 2017 Edition of AVAN

Many of you will have noticed a few changes over the past months; most notably our new name "Queensland Warbirds & Vintage Aircraft Association" (QWVAA), the expansion of our committee of management, and more recently a new president and vice president.

Clearly some change is 'a-foot' as we seek to breathe some new life into QWVAA. Accordingly, I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce the new members to your committee, and to share with you our initial plans and thoughts for our re-vitalisation. Most importantly I hope to engender your support and involvement in our change process thru a collaborative 'all hands-on deck' approach.

So To your new committee members;

Richard Waugh (Vice President – Warbirds).

Richard has been with QWVAA for some 3 years. He is an avid aviator with some 40 years of Aviation background. A professional aviator by trade, Richard is a current B737 Captain and Base Manager with the airlines. Throughout his civil career Richard has flown B747 and B767 aircraft. Richard has a colourful past, having been a fast jet pilot and Qualified Flying Instructor in the RAAF and GA. During his time in the RAAF he has flown and instructed on Mirage, F15, and Aero Macchi aircraft. Richard is an avid aviation enthusiast and owns a YAK 52 based at Watts.

John Yates (Treasurer Elect/ Understudy)

Though not on the committee at this stage, long standing Treasurer Phil Ridley as indicated his intention to stand down at the next AGM and it is anticipated that John will be elected in his place.

John has also been with QWVAA for some 3 years, and is an avid aviator of some 38 years. Also a professional aviator by trade, John is a current B737 Captain and throughout his civil career has been a Check & Training Pilot. John's interests lie in flight training and aviation safety. He is the owner of a lovely twin Comanche based at Watts.

Gill Vardi (President).

Like most of you my interest in aviation has been a long affair of over 35 years. I've been a member of QWVAA for the past 3 years, and have enjoyed the facilities provided at Watts whilst conducting the Red Thunder events for the past 5 years. My aviation background covers a career in the RAAF, Aviation Consulting, Accident Investigation and the Airlines. I'm a current A330 Check and Training Captain, and have flown B747 and B767 aircraft. During my RAAF career, I have been fortunate to fly the FA-18 Hornet and Aero Macchi aircraft. An avid 'yakker' I've recently acquired a new YAK52TW which is based at Watts.

So where are we headed Hopefully a place where members will come together to socialise and engage in aviation.

My personal belief is that an active flying program is the vehicle to revitalising our club. I am all for events that bring together our vintage, historic, warbird and GA aircraft in a highly inclusive environment. I look forward to hearing from you about the type of flying events you wish to be involved in.

Most noticeable to our membership will be the current effort to rebrand, both thru our name change to Queensland Warbirds & Vintage Aircraft Association (QWVAA) and a planned sprucing up of the old QVAG building over the next few months (clean-up, repaint, porch construction & toilet revamp). Behind the scenes, we are currently pursuing alliances with other clubs, reviewing options for an enhancement to our web for automated membership processes and, most importantly, seeking to develop of an active flying & social program.

Importantly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ross Stenhouse for his leadership and his tenacity in 'holding the fort' under difficult times. Ross will continue to produce the high quality Australian Vintage Aeroplane News publication which is always so well received. Once again Ross, thank you for all your efforts!

Very much look forward to working together. Kind Regards

Gill Vardi - President | Queensland Warbirds & Vintage Aircraft Association

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One "Click"

Author: Gary Button

Any picture's or on field of people with a hand or arm on a prop for a picture shot is sending a VERY BAD IMAGE and is VERY BAD when a PILOT does it.

TREAT ALL props AS LIVE. You could be 1 "CLICK" away from losing an arm or your life.

Pilots are TRAINED in the very early days of becoming a pilot to check BOTH mags are live before takeoff. They are also TRAINED in doing the DEAD MAG test on SHUT DOWN, BEFORE the MIXTURE is PULLED

How many Pilots do you know that at shut down after landing PULL the MIXTURE then turn OFF the MAGS?

What about the training they had many years ago?

I have seen this LOST in time and have been with pilots at the noisy end only to PUSH the MIXTURE back in and "say what about the LIVE mag you may have"?

The TWO MAGNETO system was put in place so if one FAILED the other is still LIVE and SAVED your ARSE.

DO NOT do the OPPOSITE and have a LIVE mag just waiting for some poor soul to LEAN on a prop and the CLICK of the IMPULSE mag "CLICKS IN"

I have seen what damage it did for those who survived the 1 "CLICK"

PLEASE NOTE: This article does not relate to what is trained into pilots as regards to PRE FLIGHT inspection of the Propeller and running a hand along the leading edge and other areas for any signs of damage.

YOU are TRAINED NOT TO TURN the PROPELLER.

Feedback on Auster Flying

Author: David Charles

The comments on Auster flying in volume 16/8 pf AVAN were interesting. I often found that others wanted to land them too fast. 45 on finals with 35 over the fence works well. Short field: 35 with full flap and a bit of power. I, too, prefer the wing-down X-wind landing. Touch the upwind wheel first, followed by the tail wheel, then the other main wheel when ready.

I've done the odd bounce when 3-pointing. There are lots of well-worn sayings about them:

"If you haven't bounced an Auster, you haven't flown an Auster."

"A normal landing in an Auster is a bouncy one." and so on. But it is possible to grease them on: usually when no-one is watching your monumental achievement.

A Thought for some of our Members

Being an organisation with a wide geographical spread of members the recent cyclone "Debbie" and the low pressure region that it went out to the west and then moved down to the south east corner of Queensland, in particular I would like to give a thought for long term members Susie and Alan Chinn of Arlie Beach, Queensland and Greg Challinor of Uki (and Murwillumbah) in Northern NSW. I am not sure if those members were directly affected however the stress of living in the area would be taking its toll.



Queensland Warbird and Vintage Aeroplanes - Calendar of Events

Date	Event
Saturday/Sunday 22/23 April	TAVAS Great War Flying Display
Saturday 22 April	QWVAA Management Committee Meeting
Saturday 29 April	Gayndah Orange Festival Breakfast Fly-in – 9-20sm
Saturday 29 April	QVAG Building Working Bee
Sat 6th May 2017	Red Thunder Information Day – QVAG Building Watts Bridge
Saturday 13 May	QVAG 2 nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Sunday 14 May	QVAG Management Committee Meeting 1200 hrs.
Tuesday 30 May – Sunday 4 June	Red Thunder QVAG Building Watts Bridge
Saturday 10 June	Rolleston Flyin
Saturday 10 June	QWVAA 2 nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Sunday 11 June	WBMA Breakfast at Watts 0800 – 1000 hrs.
Sunday 11 June	QWVAA Management Committee Meeting
Sunday 25 June	QWVAA Grass Roots Fly-in – Gatton Airpark 0900 – 1300 hrs.
Saturday 8 July	QWVAA 2 nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Sunday 9 July	WBMA Breakfast at Watts 0800 – 1000 hrs.
Sunday 9 July	QWVAA Management Committee Meeting 1200 hrs.
Saturday 12 August	QWVAA 2 nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Sunday 13 August	QWVAA Management Committee Meeting
Saturday 9 September	QVAG 2 nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Sunday 10 September	QWVAA Management Committee Meeting
Saturday 14 October	QWVAA 2 nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Sunday 15 October	WBMA Breakfast at Watts 0800 – 1000 hrs
Sunday 15 October	QWVAA Management Committee Meeting 1200 hrs.
Saturday 11 November	QWVAA 2 nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Sunday 12 November	WBMA Breakfast at Watts 0800 – 1000 hrs.
Sunday 12 November	QWVAA Management Committee Meeting 1200 hrs.

NB - Green highlighting signifies a QWAA event

**QUEENSLAND WARBIRDS
AND
VINTAGE AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION**



**QWVAA Fly-in & BBQ
RED THUNDER INFORMATION DAY
6th May 2017**

11:30 onwards, Briefing at 1:30pm

**Come join us and find out about one of Australia's best
flying days ...**

RED THUNDER 2017

WHATEVER YOU FLY, WARBIRD, RAG & TUBE, OR VINTAGE AIRCRAFT, YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO A MIDDAY FLY-IN, BBQ AND RED THUNDER INFORMATION DAY.

QUEENSLAND WARBIRD AND VINTAGE AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION (FORMERLY QVAG) IS PROUD TO BE A SPONSOR OF RED THUNDER 2017. RED THUNDER BRINGS THE EXPERIENCE OF FORMER & CURRENT MILITARY PILOTS OFFERING WARBIRD AND VINTAGE AIRCRAFT OWNERS FLYING WORKSHOPS AND A SNAPSHOT OF COMBAT OPERATIONS.

SO FLY OR DRIVE IN, HAVE SOME LUNCH AND LEARN ABOUT THE NEXT RED THUNDER EVENT, SEE SOME WARBIRDS AND VINTAGE AIRCRAFT. MAYBE HAVE A JOY RIDE !

**6TH MAY 2017, 11:30 FOR 1:30 BRIEFING, WATTS BRIDGE MEMORIAL AIRFIELD,
801 CRESSBROOK-CABOONBAH RD, CRESSBROOK, QLD**

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MARK GREENMANTLE - AERIALPRO PHOTOS WWW.AERIALPRO.PHOTOS

RAAF Station Bowen

Compiled by Ross Stenhouse

The association of RAAF amphibious aircraft with Bowen extends back to the late 1920s when 101 Fleet Co-operation Flight operated Supermarine Seagull III bi-planes from the seaplane tender HMAS Albatross, to obtain aerial photography over parts of the Great Barrier Reef.¹



This is how many remember the RAAF Operational Base at Bowen, they associate it with Seaplanes. Their memory is as a seaplane base and that is largely most of the story. And to a degree that is correct, it was the home during WWII for No. 1 Flying Boat Maintenance Base.

The base was built in response to a urgent request made by the RAAF for a slipway at Bowen to maintain the Catalinas of Nos 11 and 20 Squadrons based at Cairns. The first slipway was built at the harbour end of Brisbane Street, north of the town jetty. This section of Brisbane Street is still of concrete construction. The slipway was prefabricated with heavy timbers bolted together in sections. The majority of the structure was underwater and suffered badly from marine borers.

In August 1942 RAAF No.22 Operational Base Unit was established at Bowen to undertake administration and maintenance of the base. The RAAF took over the local picture theatre as a maintenance workshop and most of the squadron officers and ground crews were accommodated in various hotels, houses and shops in the main streets of Bowen.

The Denison Hotel served as squadron headquarters and officer's accommodation. Adjacent shops were used as an airmens' mess, station headquarters, and station store and guard room. Private

¹ <http://www.ww2places.qld.gov.au/places/?id=111>

houses along Dalrymple and George Streets became airmen's barracks, electrical shops, carpenters' shops, an instrument makers' shop, a sergeants' mess, transport sections and a photographic section. Elsewhere in the town houses were converted into a hospital and dental clinic, a parachute store and general equipment stores. Many of the wartime requisitioned buildings in the town survive as private shops and dwellings. In November 1942 Nos. 11 and 20 Catalina squadrons moved their base from Bowen to Cairns. RAAF No.43 Catalina Squadron was formed at Bowen in May 1943. The squadron moved to Karumba on the Gulf of Carpentaria during August to conduct night mine laying operations at Japanese-held ports in the Netherlands East Indies.

RAAF No.1 Flying Boat Maintenance Unit was formed at Bowen in October 1943. Following the decision to upgrade the development of Bowen as a flying boat repair depot, the AWC placed an order for a concrete slipway. The MRC was again responsible for supervising construction of the slipway and additional buildings erected through the Department of Public Works. From the new slipway and concrete maintenance hardstand, additional roadwork was undertaken along Thomas Street and Sinclair Street to provide access within the town, for up to four aircraft hideouts with maintenance hardstands and tie-downs.

Requisitions for additional buildings and services including two cantilever maintenance hangars at the repair depot were received by the AWC in April 1944. The cantilever hangars were designed to cover and shade the nose and wings of the flying boats during maintenance. No.1 Flying Boat Maintenance Unit was disbanded in March 1947. Following the war one of the hangars was dismantled and re-erected at the Rose Bay flying boat base at Sydney. Part of another wartime building is now incorporated in the clubroom of the Port Denison Sailing Club.²

No. 9 Squadron RAAF

9 SQN was formed on 1 January 1939 at RAAF base Richmond by renumbering 5 SQN. The role of the squadron was as a Fleet Co-operation Squadron. The squadron operated amphibious aircraft from the Royal Australian Navy's light and heavy cruisers. Each cruiser was assigned a single Seagull or Walrus amphibian.

The amphibious aeroplanes purpose was to provide their parent ships with reconnaissance, anti-submarine protection, artillery spotting and general support. As the war progressed, the need for these amphibious aircraft aboard ship diminished as the services they provided were replaced by much-improved radar, aircraft from aircraft carriers and shore based aircraft.

In early January 1943, the squadron was transferred to Bowen, Queensland, from where its aircraft flew patrol operations. During 1944, all remaining RAN cruisers had their catapults removed and No. 9 Squadron was disbanded at RAAF Base Rathmines on 31 December 1944.³

No. 11 Squadron RAAF

At the outbreak of the Second World War 11 Squadron moved to Port Moresby, having been formed as a general reconnaissance squadron at Richmond in New South Wales on 21 September 1939. The

² <http://www.ww2places.qld.gov.au/places/?id=111>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No._9_Squadron_RAAF

squadron's small flight of Seagull and Empire flying boats immediately began patrolling the Thursday Island, Tulagi, New Zealand, and Bougainville. In 1941 the unit began flying Catalina aircraft



Image above: The RAAF's first P-8A Poseidon flies in formation with a current AP-3C Orion and past No 11 Squadron aircraft including the Lockheed Neptune and Catalina

Towards the end of 1942 the unit relocated to Cairns and commenced night raids against enemy shipping and submarines attempting to land supplies around Lae, Salamaua, and Finschafen. Unit Catalinas mined enemy harbours and dropped supplies to Coastwatchers in the Solomons, New Britain, and New Ireland between April and July 1943.

At the end of the war, 11 Squadron dropped food and medical supplies to prisoner-of-war camps across south-east Asia and flew survivors back to Australia. Aircraft were withdrawn early the following year and the squadron was disbanded on 15 February 1946⁴

No. 20 Squadron RAAF

No. 20 Squadron was formed at Port Moresby, New Guinea, on 1 August 1941 for a general reconnaissance role, under the command of Squadron Leader W.N. Gibson. Its establishment was six PBY Catalina flying boats and 133 personnel, but only five aircraft (all transferred from No. 11 Squadron) and 55 personnel were available initially. The squadron conducted long-range patrols between bases scattered around the islands to Australia's north in conjunction with No. 11 Squadron. On 18 November, No. 20 Squadron's Catalinas were augmented by two Short Empire flying boats transferred from No. 11 Squadron.

⁴ <https://www.awm.gov.au/unit/U59376/>

In response to the threat of invasion at Port Moresby, Nos. 11 and 20 Squadrons moved to Bowen, Queensland, on 7 May 1942. They were soon attacking Japanese targets in Lae, Salamaua and Rabaul. By 1 July, No. 20 Squadron's strength was six Catalinas and 175 personnel, out of a planned establishment of nine aircraft and 415 personnel. Its prime responsibility in early 1942 was maritime reconnaissance as far as New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and New Caledonia; the latter half of the year saw a greater focus on night bombing.^[11] Now comprising 252 officers and men, the squadron relocated to Cairns on 11 November 1942.

In September 1944, No. 20 Squadron became part of No. 76 Wing RAAF, along with Nos. 42 and 43 Squadrons, and moved to Darwin, Northern Territory. All three squadrons operated Catalinas, their primary purpose being mine-laying

No. 20 Squadron's final wartime sortie was a patrol on 14 August 1945. Following the end of the war, the squadron operated in the transport role and ferried Australian prisoners of war home from various locations in South East Asia. It relocated to RAAF Station Rathmines, New South Wales, on 21 November. No. 20 Squadron flew its last mission, a transport flight to Balikpapan, on 21 January 1946, and disbanded at Rathmines on 27 March.⁵

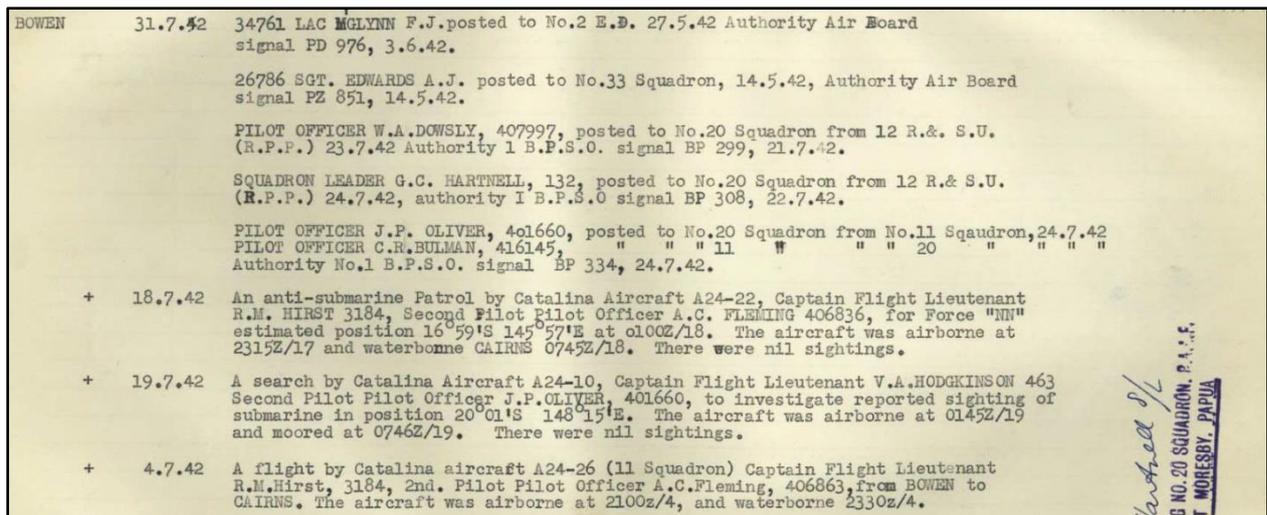


Image above: section of a page from 20 SQN daily logs. Looking through the log it can be seen that most patrols finished with "There were nil sightings".

However as with all things in life there is another side and that is as a land airfield; in minute sheet reference 7/1/5388 it states:

It is now possible to report on Bowen aerodrome, Queensland, with particular reference to aircraft dispersal.

The aerodrome is situated just above the high water mark on the edge of a swamp which abuts on the South East. On the North and West is a railway. It is virtually impossible to extend the existing facilities which consist of one runway (120 degrees) and one taxiway (45 degrees) on which preliminary grading has been carried out. The 120 degree runway is 3700 ft. long and is in good condition. It is to be further improved by the Department of Civil Aviation to the extent of slight

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No._20_Squadron_RAAF

regrading and sealing of 900 ft. at the North-western end. The apron and taxi strip are also to be sealed.

It would appear that since the aerodrome is unsuitable for operational purposes except for fighter aircraft, the dispersal policy will need revision. It is, in fact impossible to obtain proper dispersal in the vicinity of the aerodrome. It was originally proposed to construct 12 splinter proof pens, but this number was increased to 16 under the dispersal directive. Eight pens have been constructed and four hard standings have been provided as shown on drawing no. 41/42/486. A report from the DWO, Townsville indicates that it is impossible to obtain additional dispersal points and strongly recommends that the original scheme of twelve points be adhered to providing eight splinter proof pens and four dispersed hard standings.

Apart from its use for aircraft in transit north and south, the airfield has a past with greater interest even if that past has a touch of being sinister. Bowen was selected as the aerodrome for carrying out chemical warfare trials for the 1st Australian Field Experimental Station based on a farming property at Gunyarra railway siding near Proserpine in 1943.

RAAF Special Duties Flight Detachment, No.1 Aircraft Performance Unit

The RAAF Special Duties Flight Detachment, No.1 Aircraft Performance Unit moved to Bowen in early 1944 and shared the airstrip with the RAAF 9 Squadron. When the 9 Squadron moved out, the Chemical Research Unit took over the airfield and formed as a separate unit on the 15th August 1944. It was eventually disbanded in December 1945.

The 1st Australian Field Experimental Station

The station was a self-contained camp housing some 250 to 500 military personnel and scientists. Supporting staff were drawn from most of the Allied forces. Station numbers were augmented from time to time by the attachment of volunteers from the Australian forces to participate in experiments and simulated attacks involving poison gas. These tests were conducted on an irregular basis from 1944 and involved mustard gas bombing trials over Mission Beach, Hinchinbrook Island and the Tully rainforest.

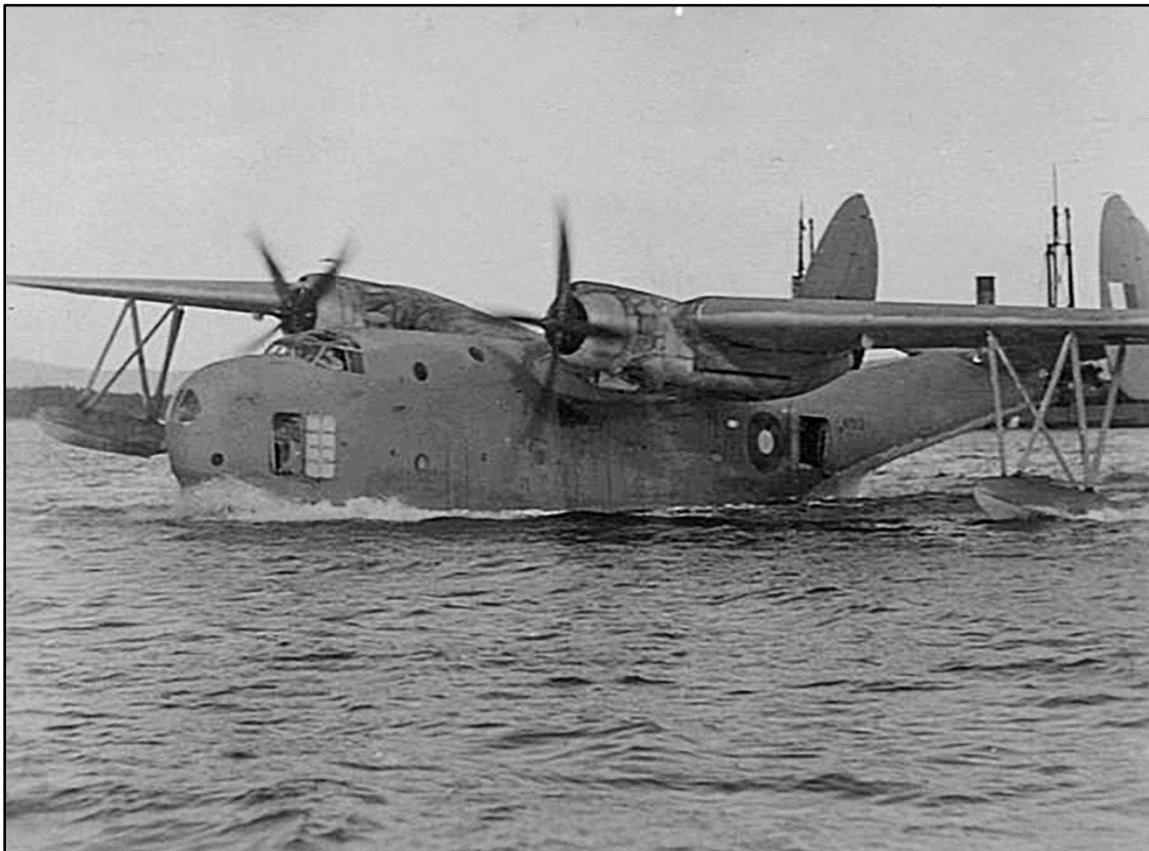
Two 'igloo-shaped' reinforced concrete explosive stores, located south of the aerodrome near the Bruce Highway, may have been constructed during this period for the storage of chemical weapons including mustard gas and phosgene bombs.

Ammunition stored at the Bowen airstrip consisted of 65 lbs. bombs, 44 gallon and 540 lbs. drums, mustard gas and other chemicals. Interpretation signs near the igloos note that the buildings were camouflaged by burial in rubble and protected by a machine gun bunker. The stores are similar to others built at the main RAAF chemical weapons stockpile at Talmoi siding in western Queensland. Drawings from Talmoi indicate that the igloos were comprised of concrete with a timber entrance door and timber bracing posts, and had a concrete entrance step and base. The timber doors on both of the igloos in Bowen have been replaced.⁶

⁶ <http://www.ww2places.qld.gov.au/places/?id=108>



Image above: One of two igloo structures believed to been used tom store chemicals being tested by 1st Australian Field Experimental Station



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

NEA0482

Image above: This Martin Mariner paid a visit to Bowen in May 1944



Image above: Catalina A24-88 'RK-A' 42 Squadron 1FBMU Bowen circa 1944. A24-88 is now under restoration at the Australian National Aviation Museum. After retiring from service, this frame was used as a houseboat on the Murray River.

Bowen Airfield Today



QUEENSLAND WARBIRDS & VINTAGE AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION



WORKING BEE

29th April 2017 - 8:00AM Till Late



As QVAG transforms into QWVAA we are looking to also transform the clubhouse and invite you to be a part of that.

All members are encouraged to come along to a one day working bee and help clean up around the outside of the building and also spruce up inside the club rooms.

Maybe even apply a lick of paint or two. Fly in if you like.

There is sure to be a ute or two to make the trip to the tip for you to help load. Why not come and meet some fellow members with a mutual interest? And bring some friends, the more the merrier.

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Disclaimer

All views expressed in this journal are not necessarily the views of the author, the editor or the Queensland Vintage Aeroplane Group Australian Flying Museum Inc. They are simply opinions and are not necessarily fact.