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### **10 Oct 39 - 10SQN flew RAAF's first WW II operational sortie**



### **10SQN Short Sunderland Mark I, P9604 'RB-J', taking off from Oban Bay, Scotland, Aug 40**

Following the War Cabinet's decision that No 10 Squadron should remain in Britain as part of RAF Coastal Command (see 7 October), the squadron flew its first operational flight on this day when Flight Lieutenants Garing and Gibson and Flying Officer Podger, with a crew of seven, flew Sunderland N9049 to Tunisia with a spare engine for a Sunderland of the RAF's No 228 Squadron which had been delayed at Bizerta. Special routing over France was employed, and the aircraft was flown non-stop each way and the aircraft returned to Pembroke Dock on 14 October 1939.

### **10 Oct 43 - SQNLDR R.L. 'Butch' Gordon awarded first Distinguished Flying Cross for action on this day**

On this day, Coomalie-based No 31 Squadron Beaufighter Flight Commander Squadron Leader Reginald Gordon in A19-40 -- whilst leading a formation of six aircraft in an attack on Tanimbar Islands -- personally shot down two of the three enemy aircraft destroyed by the formation. On arriving at the target, the flight was intercepted by an enemy twin-engined fighter which he promptly destroyed in combat. When the formation was about to return to its base, it was attacked by a second twin-engined fighter which damaged the port engine, a starboard aileron and hydraulic system of Squadron Leader Gordon's aircraft. It then passed on to attack the remainder of the flight. On the return journey his damaged engine seized and the greater part of the journey was made on one engine in an aircraft

whose aileron controls were practically useless. Finally, with fuel tanks empty, he made a successful crash landing on an auxiliary aerodrome. Squadron Leader Gordon was posthumously awarded a bar to his DFC on 2 March 1944; he died of injuries sustained when, on 27 February 1944, he crashed during a test flight flown over Coomalie Creek when both Beaufighter engines failed.

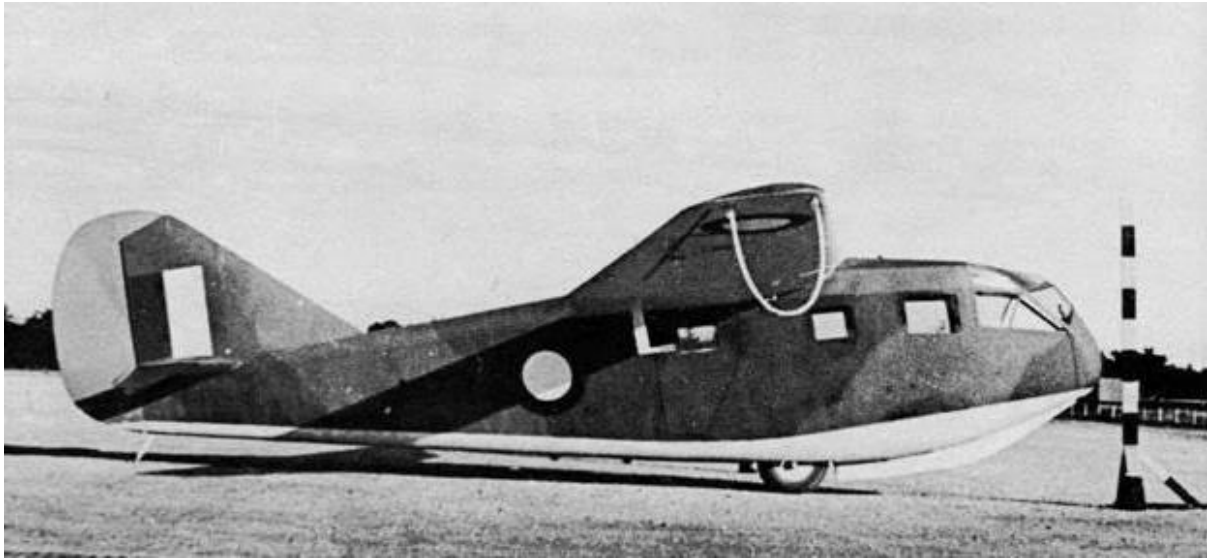
**Comment:** Interestingly, the-then Flight Lieutenant Gordon's Confidential Report assessor for the period May-December 1942 -- when he was flying with No 24 Squadron (which was reconstituting at Bankstown, NSW, after heavy losses in the defence of Rabaul) -- observed: "*This officer has always carried out his normal duties. At times he is very erratic, particularly in the observance of formal rules and regulations. Otherwise his conduct is good. His zeal and energy and personality are good. He is an average leader but lacks reliability and judgement. His manner to subordinates is good. He should improve with more experience.*" What a difference 10 months apparently made.

## **10 Oct 45 – 460SQN disbanded in the UK**

### **460SQN groundcrew, RAF Binbrook, May 44**

On this day, No 460 Squadron officially disbanded at East Kirkby in the UK. The squadron's record during three and a half years of war was phenomenal, flying 6,234 operational sorties totalling 30,526 operational hours and dropping 24,856 tons of bombs. The cost was high: 169 aircraft lost on operations and 1,018 aircrew killed or died of wounds. Following the official disbandment, the squadron adjutant and orderly room staff completed the required administrative procedures; the final Unit History entry by the Adjutant reads: *In closing this record of the work of the squadron it is most fitting to record how happy have been associations of the Australians in this unit with their brothers in the Royal Air Force. Although coming from the other side of the world, and reared in environments greatly differing from the Mother country, they have found here a welcome and a sympathetic understanding and appreciation which has strengthened the ties which bind the two countries together. The Australians record their appreciation and thanks for all that has been done. We now lay aside the weapons of war and turn as individuals to face the problems of the new peace vastly strengthened by our association together as members of 460 squadron, and by the knowledge and experience we have gained fighting beside the people of the Mother land.'*

## 11 Oct 42 - RAAF accepted prototype Experimental Glider



EG-1

On 24 March 1942, the Aircraft Advisory Committee — which had been set up by the War Cabinet in 1941 to advise the Director-General of the Department of Aircraft Production — received a communication from the Director-General of Supply and Production, Department of Air, stating that an immediate requirement existed for 126 gliders. Accompanying the communication was an RAAF specification for an experimental seven-seat prototype glider, which was submitted to the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation and to de Havilland Aircraft Pty Ltd (DHA). DHA constructed the first prototype in Sydney and, in April 1942, the RAAF authorised the construction of a second DHA G1 (or Experimental Glider (EG) 1) prototype glider, for military trials, before a production line was laid down. Following demonstration flights for the RAAF at Richmond on 29 September and further familiarisation flight on 2 October, on the morning of 5 October a Fairey Battle departed Richmond towing EG-1 to RAAF Laverton. EG-1 was officially accepted by the RAAF on this day and later renumbered with the service prototype serial A57-1001. It was joined at RAAF Laverton on 17 November by EG-2 which eventually became A57-1002.

**A comprehensive June 1976 *Air International* article on the gliders is here:** <http://www.lockoweb.com/first%20a%20series/aamb%20project/a56toa59/a57%20dhglider0001.PDF>

## 11 Oct 89 - Death of one-legged 460SQN veteran



Dunstan in the UK, c Apr 44

Roberts Dunstan attained a degree of celebrity as a one-legged gunner who served with Bomber Command in WW II before going on to a political career. Dunstan lied about his age to join the AIF when he was just 17 and served in Egypt and Libya where he was wounded outside Tobruk; the wound became infected and his leg was amputated. After convalescing in Egypt, Dunstan returned to Melbourne in July 1941 and discharged from the AIF the following February. Feeling frustrated at having served for such a short time, Dunstan -- while studying law in Geelong -- began a concerted attempt to join the RAAF as an air gunner. Exactly one year after returning to Australia he entered No 2 Bombing and Gunnery School at Port Pirie, SA and, on completion of training, Dunstan was promoted to sergeant air gunner and embarked for overseas service for a second time. After training, Dunstan was posted to No 460 Squadron; his first operation was to Dusseldorf on 11 June 1943. In October 1943 Dunstan was commissioned as a pilot officer with just two operations left to fly. On their penultimate operation, to Kassel, Dunstan's aircraft was hit by incendiaries from another Lancaster and then by a night fighter, but crash-landed safely back in England. His last operation - to Dusseldorf -- was less fraught and took place the day before Dunstan's 21st birthday. He returned to Australia in August 1944. After the war he worked as a journalist and then film critic for the Melbourne Herald. In 1953 he travelled to Italy to meet the artilleryman whom he believed had fired the shell that wounded him at Tobruk, and four years later sponsored the man's son as a migrant to Australia. In 1956 Dunstan was elected to the Victorian parliament as the Liberal member for Mornington. He went on to serve as a cabinet secretary, Minister of Water Supply and, later, Minister of Public Works. He died on this day in 1989.

### **11 Oct 93 - Ex-USAF F-111G arrival ceremony held at Amberley**



**A8-259 (ex-USAF F-111G 68-0259) at Amberley, Oct 93**

On 15 October 1992, the Minister for Defence announced the proposed acquisition of up to 18 surplus USAF F-111s to extend the RAAF type's service life. Ultimately 15 F-111G models were selected as the most suitable for introduction to RAAF service. The F-111G shared commonality with the F-111C, with the longer wings and heavier undercarriage. The G also shared some of the avionics fit that was installed during the F-111C Avionics Upgrade Program (AUP), notably the same terrain-following radar, attack radar and multi-function displays for the aircrew. On this day, an arrival ceremony for F-111G aircraft was held at RAAF Amberley. After arriving in Australia, five of the 15 G aircraft were placed in long-term storage.

### **11 Oct 03 - F-111 flypast over High Court alarmed Canberrans**



On the evening of this day, two F-111 aircraft conducted a low-level flypast of the High Court as the climax to the Court's centennial celebration. According to subsequent press reporting, Canberra police and emergency services were inundated with calls from

alarmed members of the public after the flypast, as the eve of the Bali bombings anniversary had prompted fears of terrorism. "The timing of it was appalling, on the eve of the Bali service" said Madeleine Quigley, from Ainslie, in Canberra's inner north. "I seriously thought it was a missile going for Parliament House. I didn't think it was a plane." A spokeswoman for the Court said the fly over was announced in media releases by the Court and Air Force. On 13 October, AAP press reported that the Australian Federal Police had launched an investigation into the flypast and quoted an RAAF spokesman as saying that the jets flew in from the north and across the city at an altitude of about 300 metres, performing the dump and burn for about two minutes. There were also low-level fireworks around the National Museum, where a dinner was underway as part of the celebration.