



VAPOUR TALES

June 2010 Edition

PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTION

By AVM John Quaife AM (retd)

Fighter World is a great organisation with a stunning collection that gives many people their first up-close and personal contact with fighter aircraft. Since the hangar door was opened in 1991, over half a million visitors have enjoyed learning a little about our fighter aviation heritage through our unique hands-on display, viewed daily flying operations from our observation deck, perhaps taken a tour of the Williamtown RAAF Base, browsed the items in the gift shop and more than likely joined the men and women from the Base dining at the Fighter World café.

Fighter World is supported by a dedicated team of active volunteers who each bring unique skills to our daily operations. Our volunteers provide the supervision and commentary for our tours of the Base, whilst others are engaged in maintenance and development projects, and of course we continue to bring new aircraft and display material into the collection.

Through Vapour Tales we aim to grow our support base. The newsletter will keep our Friends up to date with what's happening at Williamtown and to tell some of the stories behind the aircraft and people who keep Fighter World alive and thriving. Vapour Tales is distributed to everyone who is registered as a Friend of Fighter World.

ADMISSION PRICES

- Adults (18 years & over): \$10.00
- Children (5 - 17 years): \$8.00
- Pensioner/ Senior: \$8.00

- Family: \$30.00
(Parents & dependent children under 18)
- Children under 5 FREE
- School Groups \$5.00

Register as a friend of FIGHTER WORLD

You may register as a Friend of Fighter World by providing your email address to admin@fighterworld.com.au or by registering in person at the Fighter World office or shop during your next visit.

Your membership attracts no fee, but of course our not-for-profit status means we will always welcome any financial support or corporate sponsorship. You may elect to upgrade your Friendship to financial status through an annual subscription of \$50.00. Our Financial Friends receive discounted entry for themselves, family members or accompanying friends, a 20% discount at the gift shop and of course, look very stylish in their complimentary Fighter World cap.

As a Friend of Fighter World you may also wish to apply to become a Fighter World volunteer and are eligible to nominate for committee or working committee membership whenever nominations are requested.

Corporate Friend status is also available to organisations who will have prominent acknowledgement of their sponsorship displayed to our 27,000 annual visitors.

Gold Corporate Friend	\$5,000
Silver Corporate Friend	\$2,000
Bronze Corporate Friend	\$1,000

Visit Fighter World

Open 7 Days. 10.00am- 4.00pm
 Closed Christmas Day
 49 Medowie Rd. Williamtown NSW
 Adjacent to RAAF Williamtown

Telephone: (02) 49 65 1810
 Facsimilie: (02) 19 65 1940
 Email: admin@fighterworld.com.au



LES BOWDEN

Each issue of our newsletter will feature a profile of one of our volunteers.

Fighter World's aim to preserve and share the history of RAAF Fighter Aircraft would not be possible without the invaluable time, efforts and talents of our 30 volunteers.

Meet Les Bowden

Les is the Volunteer Leader at Fighter World and represents the volunteers on the Fighter World Board of Management. He lives near RAAF Base Williamtown at Salt Ash and is usually at Fighter World three days a week, working at the admission desk and merchandise shop or organising his fellow volunteers in aircraft and general museum maintenance.

Les is also a volunteer in the Rural Fire Service which he joined in 1969 and is now at the leadership rank of Group Captain .

He retired early after working many years as marketing representative in the food industry. Les loves anything to do with aircraft and holds a civil pilots licence.

He enjoys the camaraderie and hands-on aspect of the aircraft restoration work that he does at Fighter World.



Les gave the following answers to a quick quiz:

Favourite Movie: Top Gun

Favourite Food: A good medium rare steak

Best Holiday Destination: Broome (other than Port Stephens)

Favourite Music: Swing Era, Frank Sinatra ,Michael Buble 60s/70s

Future Goals: To help Fighter World to become bigger and better

When visiting Fighter World say hello to Grumpy (Les' nickname).

AIRCRAFT ON DISPLAY

CAC Sabre	Vampire (A97- 1)	Replicas
Hawker Hunter	Meteor	Spitfire MK 8
Mirage (A3-3)	Macchi	Messerschmitt (Bf109f)
Mirage (A7-102)	Winjeel	Fokker DR-1 Triplane
MIG-21	Jindivik	Stearman Bi- plane

- Plus a Macchi and a Mirage cockpit that you can sit in.



THE METEOR

RAAF GLOSTER METEOR F8-A77-875T

The Gloster Meteor on display at Fighter World was delivered to the RAAF in May 1953 spending most of its service with No 77 squadron at RAAF Williamtown. It formed part of the aerobatic display team 'The Meteorites' during 1958.

An identical Meteor was being flown by Warrant Officer Ron Guthrie of No 77 Squadron during the Korean War in the early 50s when he was forced to eject from his damaged aircraft at 39,000 feet at a speed of Mach 0.84 during combat with a Chinese MIG 15. This event was significant in aerial combat history as the first pilot to be ejected in combat at the highest speed and at the greatest height. It took Warrant Officer Guthrie almost 30 minutes to reach the ground by parachute. Ron Guthrie describes all these world records at the time and his subsequent capture and two years of horrendous treatment in captivity in his book co-authored with Col King "Escape from North Korea".

The Meteor was at best a stop gap fighter in Korea and the best option available to the RAAF at the time. No 77 Squadron was originally equipped with P-51 Mustang fighters, a great aircraft during World War II but no match in air to air combat in the new jet era for the excellent Russian designed MIG 15 being flown during the Korean War by the Chinese. The RAAF re-equipped No 77 Squadron with the Meteor because there was little other choice available. Time was important; a new jet fighter was needed urgently and the RAAF's first choice was the American F-86 Sabre. Unfortunately these would not be available from the Americans until 1954. The decision was made to purchase the Meteor which was being used by the British Royal Air Force as an interceptor. At the same time the Commonwealth Aircraft Corp was entering into firm arrangements to build Sabres in Australia.

On 15 May 1941, the experimental Gloster E28/39 made the first flight by a British jet-propelled aircraft, and, on 5 March 1943, the Gloster Meteor became the Royal Air Force's first operational jet aircraft. Early versions

of the Meteor were the only Allied jets to see action in World War II. Subsequently, for over a decade, Meteor F 4s and F 8s were the main Royal Air Force interceptors. Other versions included the Meteor T 7T, FR 9, PR 10, and Armstrong-Whitworth Meteors NF 11 to 14. In 1946 a RAAF Meteor captured Australian newspaper headlines when it flew over Melbourne at 788 km/h (490 mph). Imported on 7 June 1946, this Meteor F 4 carried out trials at Laverton and Darwin, however, it was not until 1951, when more Meteors were acquired for combat action with No 77 Squadron in Korea where these aircraft made their mark in RAAF history.

A total of 93 single seat Meteor F 8s and six Meteor T 7s dual seat trainers were allocated to the Korean War with scattered serial numbers ranging between A77-2 (T 7) and A77-982 (F 8). No 77 Squadron served with distinction

in Korea but at a terrible cost with 35 pilots and ground personnel being killed and 58 aircraft lost, 44 of which were Meteors. The Meteor also proved to be no match for the MIG 15 with the destruction of only three MIGs able to be claimed. As result they were used mainly in a ground-attack role with greater success.



Forty-one F 8s and three T 7s returned to Australia aboard HMAS Vengeance, and by 1958 most Meteors had been replaced by Australian Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation Sabre, a highly modified and superior version of the original American Sabre. Meteors served with Citizen's Air Force squadrons until the RAAF "officially" retired the Meteor in 1963. However, Meteors with RAAF and RAAF serials continued to fly on Ministry of Supply trials at Edinburgh. (information courtesy of Point Cook RAAF Museum)

Serious lessons were learnt from combat operation of the Meteor in Korea that were to shape the future direction of RAAF fighter pilot training. Squadron Leader Dick Cresswell was largely responsible for establishing No2 Operational Training Unit Fighter Combat Instructors course which is an essential part of RAAF operations today. This ensures that even though the RAAF seems small, its methods and systems are of the highest standards making it widely regarded as the best little Air Force in the world.





MESSERSCHMITT

MESSERSCHMITT BF 109- F2 REPLICA

The Messerschmitt BF-109 full scale model on display at Fighter World has been refurbished from a wreck over several years by dedicated Fighter World volunteers.

It is painted to replicate a BF109F-2 that served with 111 Gruppe (Group), Jagdgeschwader 2 (Fighter Wing 2), the famous 'Richthofen' Geschwader (Wing). A shield is painted under the cockpit with the 'R' script for Richthofen in memory of the famous WW1 German fighter ace. It was the regular aircraft of Staffelkapitan (Squadron Leader), 9 Staffel (9 Squadron), Oberleutnant Carl Hans Roders who was killed when shot down by a Spitfire over the English Channel on 23 June 1941. At the time of his death Roders had nine victories.

The BF-109 was more than a match for most enemy (allied) fighter types with the single exception of the Supermarine Spitfire. Over 33,000 Messerschmitt BF-109s were produced. The Messerschmitt's major advantages were small size, cheap and rapid production, superior acceleration, rate

of climb, dive speed and maneuverability. Faults were the narrow track landing gear, a severe tendency to swing or swerve on takeoff and landing and inferior lateral control at high airspeeds.

THE MESSERSCHMITT BF – 109 AUSTRALIAN CONNECTION

The BF - 109 was the main adversary of Royal Australian Air Force No 3 Squadron P-40 Kittyhawk fighters in the African Desert during World War 2. A captured BF-109 was test flown by the Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Bobby Gibbs. That aircraft survives today at the Royal Air Force Museum in the UK.

Three BF-109s, as prototypes for planned Japanese production, were sent to Japan with a German engineer. Japan planned to use the Messerschmitts in combat against Australian and American aircraft in the Pacific. The decision was made, however, to concentrate on mass production of what was to become the now famous Mitsubishi A6M Zero which was much better suited to tropical and aircraft carrier operations.

MERCHANDISE

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