The enormous cost of War!!

Ted the Mac

Wars are an enormous and unnecessary waste of human life. During World War 2, on average, 6,600 American Service men died each month – that's an average of 220 per day. Wars are also an enormous waste of effort and equipment. Most Americans who were not adults during WWII have no understanding of the magnitude of the waste. This listing of some of the aircraft facts gives a bit of insight to it.

During the war, a total of 276,000 aircraft were manufactured in the US.

The US civilian population maintained a dedicated effort for four years, many working long hours seven days per week and often also volunteering for other work. WWII was the largest human effort in history.

Statistics from Flight Journal magazine.

THE PRICE OF VICTORY (cost of an aircraft in WWII dollars)

B-17	$204,370.	P-40	$44,892.
B-24	$215,516.	P-47	$85,578.
B-25	$142,194.	P-51	$51,572.
B-26	$192,426.	C-47	$88,574.
B-29	$605,360.	PT-17	$15,052.
P-38	$97,147.	AT-6	$22,952.

From 1942 onward, America averaged 170 planes lost every day. The numbers are mind boggling.

During the war, the US produced 12,731 B-17 bombers, stretched wingtip to wingtip they would extend for 400 klms, that's a bit further than from Melbourne to Holbrook, amazing figures when you think of them.

Here are some more figures:

THE NUMBERS GAME

$3.67184943 \times 10^{10}$ litres of fuel was consumed,	1942-1945
107.8 million hours flown,	1943-1945
459.7 billion rounds of aircraft ammo fired overseas,	1942-1945
7.9 million bombs dropped overseas,	1943-1945
2.3 million combat sorties, (one sortie = one takeoff).	1941-1945
299,230 aircraft accepted,	1940-1945
808,471 aircraft engines accepted,	1940-1945
799,972 propellers accepted,	1940-1945

The Irish have solved their own fuel problems.
They imported 50 million tonnes of sand from the Arabs and they're going to drill for their own oil.

These are the number of different aircraft produced, by all countries, during the war.

Ilyushin IL-2 Sturmovik 36,183

Yakolev Yak-1,-3,-7,-9 31,000+

Messerschmitt Bf-109 30,480

Focke-Wulf Fw-190 29,001

Supermarine Spitfire/Seafire 20,351

Convair B-24/PB4Y Liberator/Privateer 18,482

Republic P-47 Thunderbolt 15,686

North American P-51 Mustang 15,875

Junkers Ju-88 15,000

Hawker Hurricane 14,533

Curtiss P-40 Warhawk 13,738

Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress 12,731

Vought F4U Corsair 12,571

If a turtle doesn't have a shell, is he homeless or naked??

Grumman F6F Hellcat 12,275

Petlyakov Pe-2 11,400

Lockheed P-38 Lightning 10,037

Mitsubishi A6M Zero 10,449

Surely there is another word out there for synonym.

North American B-25 Mitchell 9,984

Lavochkin LaGG-5 9,920

The LaGG-5 was produced with both water-cooled (top) and air-cooled (bottom) engines.

Grumman TBM Avenger 9,837

Bell P-39 Airacobra 9,584

Nakajima Ki-43 Oscar 5,919

DeHavilland Mosquito 7,780

Avro Lancaster 7,377

Heinkel He-111 6,508

Handley-Page Halifax 6,176

Messerschmitt Bf-110 6,150

Lavochkin LaGG-7 5,753

How do they get koalas and roos to cross the road only at those yellow road signs.

Boeing B-29 Superfortress 3,970

Short Stirling 2,383

And not all losses were as a direct result of conflict, in less than four years (December 1941- August 1945), the US Army Air Forces lost 14,903 pilots, aircrew and assorted personnel plus 13,873 aircraft, inside the continental United States. They were the result of 52,651 aircraft accidents (6,039 involving fatalities). That is 1,170 aircraft accidents per month, nearly 40 a day.

It gets worse.....Almost 1,000 US Army planes disappeared while being delivered from the US to foreign countries and 43,581 aircraft were lost overseas including 22,948 on combat missions (18,418 against the Western Axis) with a huge 20,633 attributed to non-combat causes. In a single 376 plane raid in August 1943, 60 B-17s were shot down. That was a 16 percent loss rate and meant 600 empty bunks in England .

In 1942-43, it was statistically impossible for bomber crews to complete a 25-mission tour in Europe. Pacific theatre losses were far less (4,530 in combat) owing to smaller forces committed. The worst B-29 mission against Tokyo on May 25, 1945, cost 26 Superfortresses, 5.6 percent of the 464 dispatched from the Marianas .

By the end of the war, over 40,000 airmen had been killed in combat theatres and another 18,000 wounded. Some 12,000 missing men were declared dead, including a number "liberated" by the Soviets but never returned. More than 41,000 were captured, half of the 5,400 held by the Japanese died in captivity, compared with one-tenth in German hands. Total combat casualties were pegged at 121,867. US manpower made up the deficit. The Army Air Force's (AAF) peak strength was reached in 1944 with 2,372,000 personnel, nearly twice the previous year's figure. The losses were huge---but so were production totals.

From 1941 through 1945, American industry delivered more than 276,000 military aircraft. That number was enough not only for US Army, Navy and Marine Corps, but also for allies as diverse as Britain, Australia, China and Russia. In fact, from 1943 onward, America produced more planes than Britain and Russia combined and more than Germany and Japan together manufactured during 1941-45.

It was not only the US which took massive losses. Through much of 1944, the Luftwaffe sustained uncontrolled haemorrhaging, reaching 25 percent of aircrews and 40 planes a month. And in late 1944 into 1945, nearly half the pilots in Japanese squadrons had flown fewer than 200 hours. The disparity of two years before had been completely reversed.

The US sent many of her sons to war with an absolute minimum of training. Some fighter pilots entered combat in 1942 with less than 1 hour in their assigned aircraft. The 357th Fighter Group (often known as The Yoxford Boys) went to England in late 1943 to fly the P51, having trained on P-39s. The group never saw a Mustang until shortly before its first combat mission. A high-time P-51 pilot had 30 hours in type. Many had fewer than five hours. Some had one hour. When new type aircraft arrived, many combat units transitioned in combat. The attitude was, "They all have a stick and a throttle. Go fly `em."

When the famed 4th Fighter Group converted from P-47s to P-51s in February 1944, there was no time to stand down for an orderly transition. The Group commander, Col. Donald Blakeslee, said,"You can learn to fly `51s on the way to the target .A future P-47 ace said, "I was sent to England to die." He was not alone. Some fighter pilots tucked their wheels in the well on their first combat mission with one previous flight in the aircraft. Meanwhile, many bomber crews were still learning their trade. Of Jimmy Doolittle's 15 pilots on the April 1942 Tokyo raid, only five had won their wings before 1941. All but one of the 16 co-pilots were less than a year out of flight school.

In WWII flying safety took a back seat to combat. The AAF's worst accident rate was recorded by the A-36 while transitioning to the P-51: a staggering 274 accidents per 100,000 flying hours. Next worst were the P-39 at 245, the P-40 at 188, and the P-38 at 139. All were Allison powered.

Bomber wrecks were fewer but more expensive. The B-17 and B-24 averaged 30 and 35 accidents per 100,000 flight hours, a horrific figure considering that from 1980 to 2000 the US Air Force's major mishap rate was less than 2. The B-29 was even worse at 40; the world's most sophisticated, most capable and most expensive bomber was too urgently needed to stand down for mere safety reasons. The AAF set a reasonably high standard for B-29 pilots, but the desired figures were seldom attained. The original cadre of the 58th Bomb Wing was to have 400 hours of multi-engine time, but there were not enough experienced pilots to meet the criterion. Only ten percent had overseas experience. Conversely, when a $2.1 billion B-2 crashed in 2008, the Air Force initiated a two-month "safety pause" rather than declare a "stand down", let alone grounding. The B-29 was no better for maintenance. Though the R3350 was known as a complicated, troublesome power-plant, no more than half the mechanics had previous experience with the Duplex Cyclone. But they made it work.

Perhaps the greatest unsung success story of AAF training was Navigators. The Army graduated some 50,000 during the War and many had never flown out of sight of land before leaving the US for a war

zone. Yet the huge majority found their way across oceans and continents without getting lost or running out of fuel--- a stirring tribute to the AAF's educational establishments.

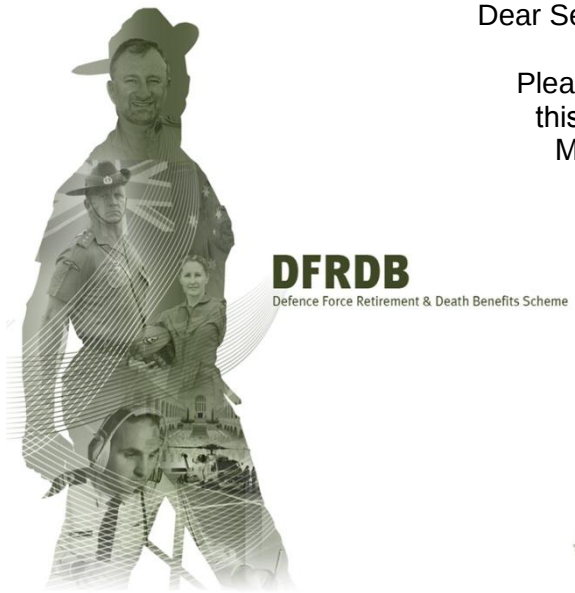
It was possible for a flying cadet at the time of Pearl Harbor to finish the war with eagles on his shoulders. That was the record of John D. Landers, a 21-year-old Texan, who was commissioned a second lieutenant on the 12th December, 1941. He joined his combat squadron with 209 hours total flight time, including 2½ in P-40s. He finished the war as a full colonel, commanding an 8th Air Force Group --- at age 24. As the training pipeline filled up, however those low figures became exceptions. By early 1944, the average AAF fighter pilot entering combat had logged at least 450 hours, usually including 250 hours in training. At the same time, many captains and first lieutenants claimed over 600 hours.

At its height in mid-1944, the Army Air Forces had 2.6 million people and nearly 80,000 aircraft of all types. Today (2009) the US Air Force employs 327,000 active personnel (plus 170,000 civilians) with 5,500+ manned and perhaps 200 unmanned aircraft. The 2009 figures represent about 12 percent of the manpower and 7 percent of the airplanes of the WWII peak.

Whether there will ever be another war like that experienced in 1940-45 is doubtful, as fighters and bombers have given way to helicopters and remotely-controlled drones over Afghanistan and Iraq .But within living memory, men left the earth in 1,000-plane formations and fought major battles five miles high, leaving a legacy that remains timeless.

DFRDB.

Not surprisingly, the on-again, off-again, will it or won't it, enquiry into indexation of DFRDB pensions generates lots and lots of correspondence, it's a topic that affects many people. Peter Thornton has written a letter to Parliament commenting on the 2010 Department of Finance's Update of the 2008 Matthews' Review.



Dear Senators and Members of Parliament,

Please find attached my research paper and formal response to this year's Department of Finance "Update" to the flawed Matthews' Review of 2008.

Upon inspection, you will find that I have left no stone unturned and I believe that there is a strong case for the Parliament to seriously reconsider its position in regards to the fair and equitable indexation treatment of Commonwealth and Military Superannuation.

Last week, I watched live the Senate debate that ensued over the Fair Indexation Bill for DFRDB. What struck me straight away was Senator Wong's statement that the "fiscal cost" is estimated to $1.7B over the next 4 years.

Australian Government
Defence Force Retirement & Death Benefits Scheme

This figure appears to be a threefold increase on that same Actuary's 2008 figures (See it HERE) submitted to the Matthews' Review. There must be some mistake!

As you will find within my paper, the Parliament already has the means to ameliorate the indexation problem with a possible solution to actually save additional money as well. If the recommendations of utilising the Future Fund and the ARIA funds under management were adopted, it would circumvent the need for the Senate / Parliament to look elsewhere; alleviating the need to put the Government's Program agenda in jeopardy (i.e. Defence / DMO activities) or drawing upon the Rent Resource Tax. I am sure that if the Treasury and Finance were given a Parliamentary mandate to look at the balance sheet in a more holistic way (as opposed to just a "fire and brimstone" perspective) then I am sure we would find a win-win solution for all concerned.

Also, and to dismiss a common political notion that this is just a Canberra centric issue, I have also attached a schedule (see it HERE) detailing the total number of affected members within each of the pre-2010 election marginal seats (with a few extras thrown in). Please don't misconstrue this list as some form of cheap Political blackmail, it is in fact a genuine and sincere attempt to apprise the Parliament that this issue is truly ubiquitous throughout the community .... anywhere from the outback deserts of the electorate of Linigari to perhaps a digger sitting in RSL in down town North Sydney (a profile for all electorates will be built in time).

You can see his letter HERE

Update!!!

The Committee recommends the Senate not approve the Bill. The dissenting report recommends otherwise. You will note that the committee members for this inquiry consisted of 3 ALP (2 NSW and 1 Tas), 2 LP (Vic) and one Green (WA). Despite the Greens election rhetoric about supporting Fair Indexation it is instructive to note that the Greens senator voted **with** the ALP AGAINST the bill.

The report is now available HERE.

The bill should now come up in the Senate mid June so get your pens out and write a note to **your** state senators expressing your disgust. If you keep quiet they will think you are in agreement with them!!

One nice thing about egotists, they don't talk about other people.