



## The Marconi Myriad.

Geoff Mayhew wrote:

Forty years after last being together at 114 Mobile Control and Reporting Unit when the RADAR was based at Amberley, a few of the Radtechs organised themselves and met up at their old watering hole the Walloon Pub, which is just down the road from the original RADAR site.



Everyone was amazed at how well the intervening years had treated the troops and Mud Anstiss even managed to fit into his 1A jacket proudly adorned with his LAC prop. The wives too had a great catch-up because the unit had a very active social club during its time at Amberley, so strong friendships were formed. 114MCRU, which was originally formed during WW2 on the 23 May 1943 at Camden NSW, had served throughout the Pacific before being disbanded after the Malayan Emergency and was then re-formed and re-equipped in the late 60's. It was distinguishable by its huge radome and was like a country club, away from the base at Amberley and well set up with a volleyball court, a practice putting green, BBQ etc. The only downside was once every so often those on duty had to attend the O.C's parade down at the

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base. The state of the art system, which had the codename Hubcap, was built by Plessey and used a Westinghouse 3D RADAR housed within an inflated fabric/rubber radome, connected via a microwave link to the operations centre housed within 6 shipping containers. Here, a dozen Plessey display positions manned by Plotters and Battle Controllers were driven by 2 Marconi Myriad computers, which at the time were amongst the world's fastest machines.



The Myriads, situated in the computer cabin, were each the size of a large desk but containing just 16kb of ferrite core memory, with extra memory contained in a fridge sized cabinet holding another 64kb of 24 bit RAM. Large rolls of punched paper tape held the program which was reloaded each day using high speed readers which would fling the tape many meters at incredible speeds. The computer cabin also contained a system of 6 bar-fridge sized boxes just to generate the characters A-Z, 0-9 and the icons to represent planes etc for displaying on the screens. Another fridge sized interface unit connected everything together and delivered the data serially via scores of cables which snaked between the cabins. More shipping



container sized cabins housing Microwave, VHF and UHF comms, a workshop and storeroom for spares whilst several large power generators, (50hz and 60hz for the British and American systems) completed the site and made for a very interesting piece of infrastructure. The whole system was designed to be transportable by Hercules, all very well except the RAAF had insufficient numbers of Hercs to move the behemoth in one go and it took several sorties just to get the whole thing to Darwin for an exercise. 114MCRU has since been re-equipped with more easily transportable hardware, has served in Afghanistan and is now based in Darwin.

## RAAF ATC.

And Mike Gahan writes:

I've been meaning to contribute to RAM for a while but I've been a bit busy for the past months with a project in Changi and some other work in Asia. Bit more relaxed in the project out here mid Pacific, "where the equator crosses the dateline" as the tourist brochure says. Interesting place, lovely people and a very rewarding task as my local counterparts really want to "get it right", unlike the counterparts in Kabul and Jakarta in previous projects who merely wanted someone to do it all for them and to then take the blame – as most consultants will attest.

A bit of background on this paradise, it was the scene of the bloodiest battle of WW II - 6000 killed in 76 hours on an island 700 metres at the widest, 35 metres at the causeway and just over 2km long – look at the Wikipedia entry on [Battle of Tarawa](#).

I was commissioned into the ATC category in May, 52 ATC course, posted to Amberley, Butterworth, CFS C FLT, Williamtown, SATC, Russell, Tindal (SATCO/XO), [Staff College](#), SATC, Training Command (SOATS) and retired in 1993.

WGCDR ATC 6 months before turning 40 does not bode well for a future 15 years (in those days). Been consulting around the globe since: Malaysia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, South Africa, Somalia, Singapore, Fiji, Afghanistan, Maldives, Thailand, Korea, Nepal, NZ, UK, US, UAE, Oman, Saudi Arabia and a few others and now Kiribati. Been a ball, most of the time; Kabul was a little rough for a year.

The attached photos might spring a few memories for some of the "old and bold". We called it CPN/4 but I've been corrected a number of times by UK and US folk who tell me our version was actually an MPN/11. At an Air Traffic Control Association convention and exhibits (5 acres of them) a few years ago in Washington I was shown an Operator's Manual on the Lockheed Martin stand and the details certainly matched those I remembered from my hours in Bay 15 risking future male progeny and hearing in my left ear. Perhaps some of your readers could offer some clarification before the memory fades.

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CPN-4 at East Sale. 1961.

The pictures were sent to me by Geoff (Redbo) Reddish who also sent a couple of course photos of his, also attached. When I was an ATC instructor at CFS, Geoff was the GCA instructor, using the FPN/36 (Quadradar). That fine bit of equipment and the simulator target generators we used in those days are now outside the SATC HQ and in the foyer.

**L-R: (17 GCA Controller) Geoff Reddish, Marshall, McPhie, Dickie**

A year or so later I replaced Geoff as the GCA instructor. At the time the RAAF was transitioning to the new phased array GCA system ???/802 so there was no need to have the students manipulate the





72 operator controls found in various trays below waist level and difficult for students to find in the dark.



CPN-4 at Williamtown, 1965

In their wisdom DPO sent me a course of four females for my first course. It may be difficult to imagine but I managed (or perhaps they ignored any problems in those pre PC days) to get through 40 runs each with me manipulating the controls under the shelf and between their legs in a small dark room. Techs and controllers who worked on the Quad will understand!!

## **B-707 lost in training accident**

A Boeing 707-368C of Richmond-based No 33 Squadron was lost on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 1991 (25 years ago) in a training accident off the Gippsland coast of Victoria. The aircraft (A20-103) was one of six former civil airliners operated by the RAAF for VIP and long-distance military



transport, and also for inflight refuelling of F/A-18 Hornet fighters. While three kilometres from Woodside Beach, 43 kilometres south of RAAF Base East Sale, the aircraft stalled and crashed into the sea, killing all five men on board. A board of inquiry concluded that the crew was controversially carrying out an asymmetric handling exercise when the aircraft made a sudden and violent departure from controlled flight. A subsequent coronial inquest also identified systemic failures relating to a deficiency of documentation, inadequate research into the operating characteristics of the aircraft and a lack of sufficient training in the types of manoeuvre which resulted in the accident.



The Board of Inquiry concluded that the instructor devised a demonstration of asymmetric flight that was 'inherently dangerous and that was certain to lead to a sudden departure from controlled flight' and that he did not appreciate this. The Board noted there were deficiencies in the acquisition and documentation of 707 operational knowledge within the RAAF combined with the absence of effective mechanisms to prevent the erosion of operational knowledge at a time when large numbers of pilots were resigning from the air force. There was no official 707 QFI conversion course and associated syllabus and no adequate QFI instructors' manual. There were deficiencies in the documented procedures and limitations pertaining to asymmetric flight in the 707 and a lack of fidelity in the RAAF 707 simulator in the flight regime in which the accident occurred, which, assuming such a requirement existed, required actual practise in flight. 'The captain acted with the best of intentions but without sufficient professional knowledge or understanding of the consequences of the situation in which he placed the aircraft,' the Board said.

Click [HERE](#) to see the TV news reports of the day on the incident/

Just before the funeral services, the undertaker came up to the very elderly widow and asked, "How old was your husband?" "98," she replied: "Two years older than me" "So you're 96," the undertaker commented. She responded, "Hardly worth going home, is it?"

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## 10 Sqn, 1956.

Laurie Edward send us this pic, it was taken in the 10Sqn hangar at Townsville back in 1956.



## And in 1966.



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Laurie Gray (right) says: I was at 10 SQN May to Dec 1966 (as a Radmech) and according to my records the pic was taken about Oct '66. I titled my copy "I'm in there somewhere" I remember the pic being taken; the photographer having to move further and further back to get everyone in.



## Geoff Phillips.



Geoff at the recent Townsville air show – it brought back a lot of memories, he'd worked there on 10 Sqn's Neppies 50 years ago.

Reporters interviewing a 104-year-old woman: "And what do you think is the best thing about being 104?" the reporter asked. She simply replied, "No peer pressure."

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## 19 Appy (Wagga).

With a REAL Herc.



## 77 Sqn, Willytown, 1983.



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My memory's not as sharp as it used to be. Also, my memory's not as sharp as it used to be.



## 39 ATC Course.



Sorry – we don't have any names, perhaps someone can help!

## Richmond 1987.



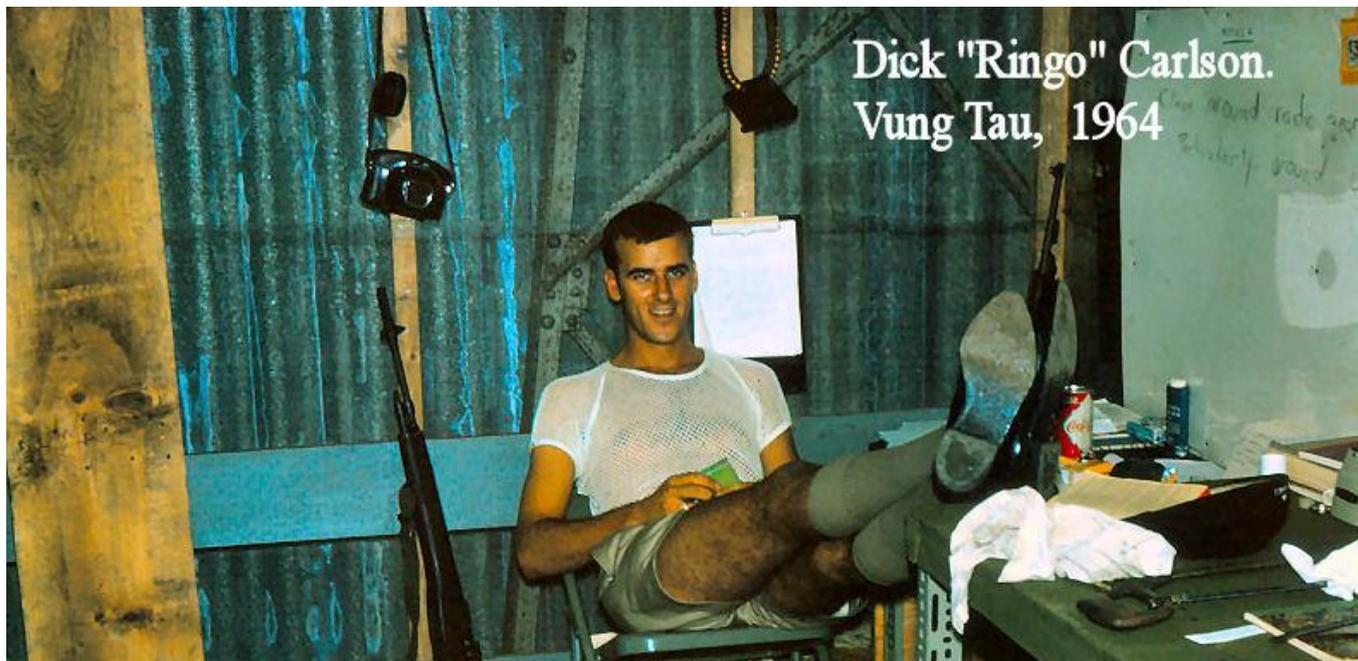
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A Radtech's life was a hard life!!

## Geoff Mayhew sent us these pics.

They were taken at a recent 114 MCRU get together.



L-R: Ron Anstiss, John Mackie, Allison Anstiss, Geoff Mayhew and Marilyn Mackie.

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L-R: Kevin Collins, Ross Ginn, Mike Sheppard.



Allan Casalegno with Ron Anstiss proudly showing he can still fit in his uniform, with John Russell ignoring the spectacle.

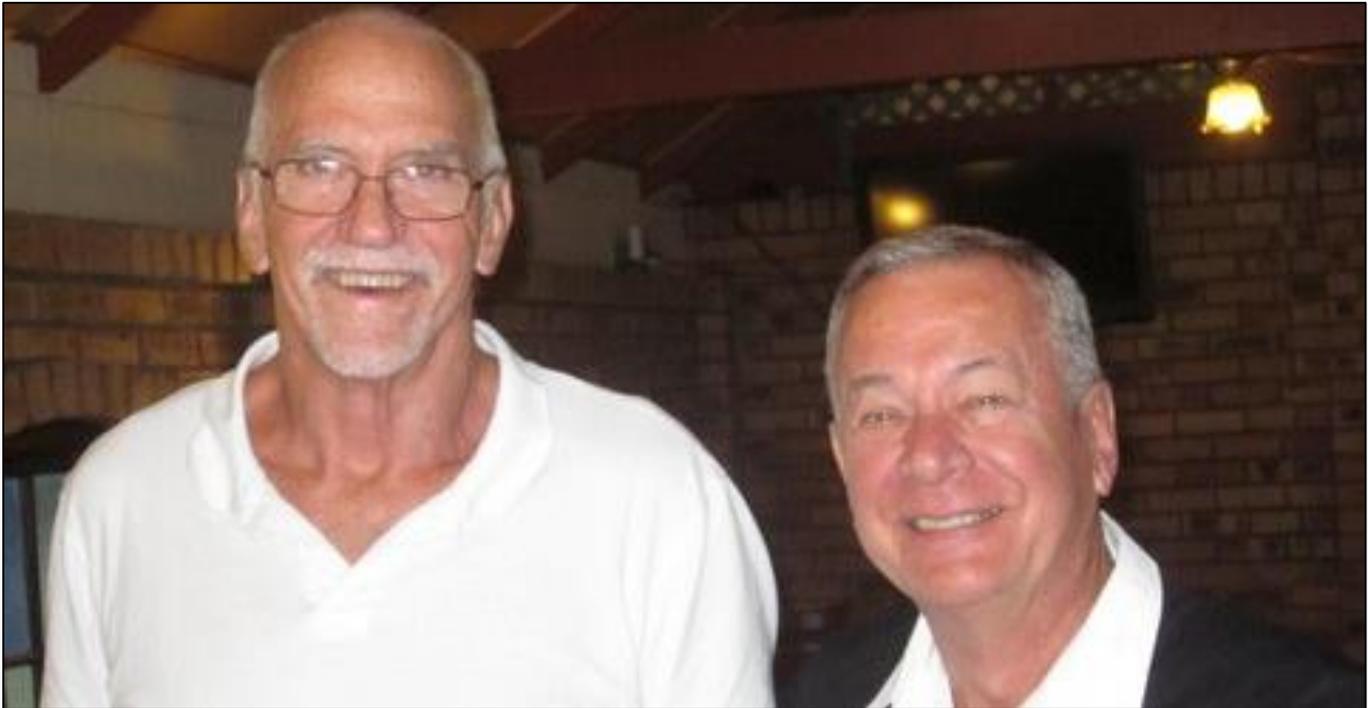
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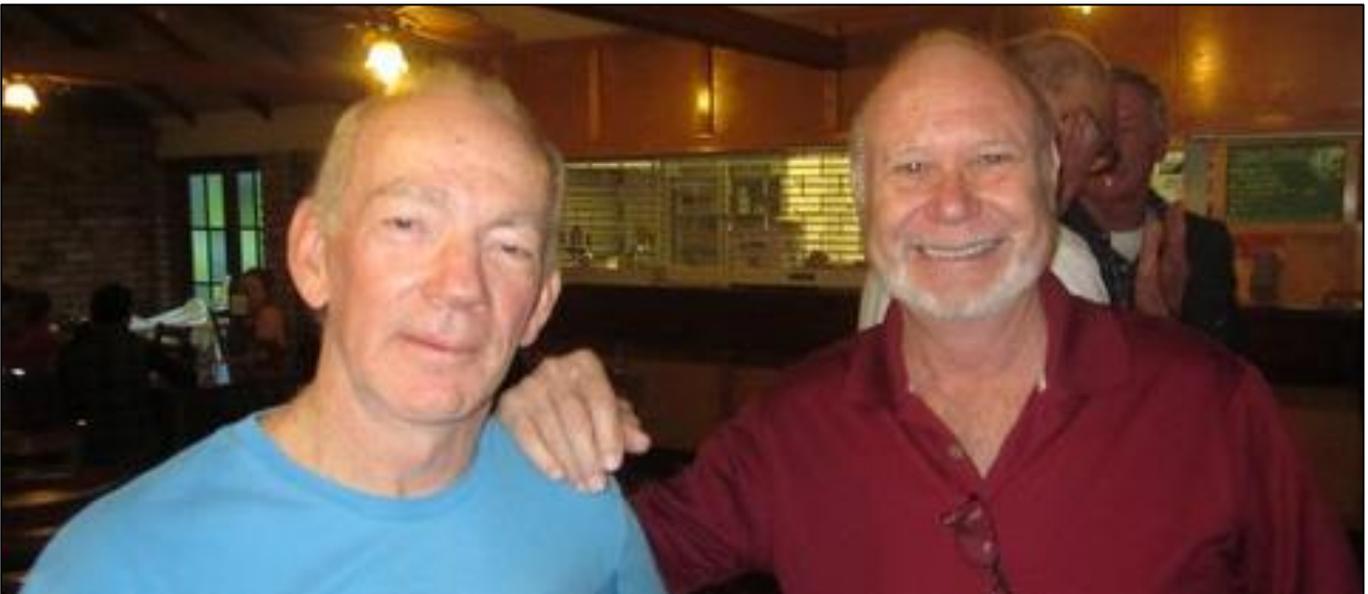


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“Casa” and John Russell proving age doesn’t weary them.



Super fit John Dixon supporting John Ackfield



John Russell and John Mackie sharing some wares.

## 452 Squadron

452 Squadron RAAF was formed at RAF Kirton-in-Lindsey on 8 April 1941 under Article XV of the Empire Air Training Scheme and was the first Australian squadron formed in Britain during World War II. On 22 May, the squadron became operational as a fighter unit, flying early model Supermarine Spitfires. In July, it was moved to RAF Kenley, where it became part of No. 11 Group RAF.

The squadron rapidly developed a formidable reputation in operations against German forces; in one month it was credited with shooting down 22 German Bf-109 fighters and was involved in many different kinds of operations, including offensive patrols, convoy escort and bomber escort missions over Europe. One of the most unusual occurred on 19 August 1941, when the Kenley Wing—among others—was tasked with escorting a formation that included a Blenheim bomber that—with the co-operation of the Germans—dropped an artificial leg by parachute for British ace Douglas Bader, who was a prisoner of war. The bombers then flew on to bomb the Gosnay power plant. In the dogfighting that took place during the operation, No. 452 Squadron was heavily engaged, shooting down one aircraft and scoring "probable" victories over two others; several of its aircraft were damaged.

Another notable operation was the attack on the German warships Scharnhorst, Prinz Eugen and Gneisenau, which were attempting the "Channel Dash" from their French harbour on 11

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February 1942, damaging one of the escorting destroyers. One of the squadron's best known pilots during this time was Keith "Bluey" Truscott, who was credited with 16 aerial victories between April 1941 and March 1942, and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) while serving with No. 452 Squadron in Britain.



**L-R: SqnLdr Keith "Bluey" Truscott, Paddy Finucane (RAF), SqnLdr Raymond Thorold-Smith.**

Although nominally an Australian unit while it was in Europe, No. 452 Squadron also had some British personnel as well as personnel from British Commonwealth countries and other nationalities. One of these was the Irish ace Paddy Finucane. A number of Polish pilots also flew with the squadron.

The squadron moved to RAF Redhill in October 1941, remaining there until March 1942, when No. 452 Squadron replaced its sister, No. 457 Squadron, at RAF Andreas, Isle of Man, where it remained until it withdrew from operations in Britain in June of that year to return to Australia.



Its final aerial victory came that month and the squadron's final tally in Europe was 70 enemy aircraft shot down and 17 damaged, for the loss of 22 pilots killed. It sailed for home on 21 June, arriving in Melbourne on 13 August and re-assembled at Richmond, New South Wales, on 6 September. The squadron began a refresher training at Richmond, using a varied collection of aircraft because its Spitfires had been commandeered in transit by the Royal Air Force in the Middle East.



452 Squadron, Kirton, UK. 1940.

452 Squadron became operational again on 17 January 1943, having received Spitfire MK V aircraft in October the previous year. Based at [Batchelor Airfield](#) in the Northern Territory it became part of No. 1 Wing RAAF, which defended Darwin from Japanese air raids. The squadron was relocated to [Strauss Airfield](#) on 1 February and, with the exception of a brief period between 9 and 27 March 1943 when it was deployed Pearce to reinforce the air defences of Perth, it remained at Strauss, protecting Darwin, until 30 June 1944.

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The previous April, the squadron had received more advanced Mark VIII Spitfire. In May, it had become part of No. 80 Wing RAAF. Throughout this period, the squadron was involved in significant actions during which it shot down several Japanese aircraft; its first large-scale battle took place in early March.



On 1 July 1944 the squadron relocated again, this time to [Sattler Airfield](#) in the Northern Territory. Responsibility for defending Darwin had been handed over to two Royal Air Force squadrons; as a result, No. 452 Squadron was reassigned to ground-attack missions. The squadron began attacking targets in the Dutch East Indies and on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 1944 it was sent to Morotai, where it was assigned to the 1st Tactical Air Force to support the Australian operations in Kalimantan, flying mainly ground attack missions and anti-shiping strikes.

**Tim Goldsmith, 452 Sqn pilot. Darwin.**

The ground staff were sent to Juwata airfield on Tarakan in May 1945, but operations did not start immediately as the landing field



was not ready. The squadron undertook missions against Kelabaken and Simalumong on 2 July; further attacks occurred on Tawoa on 10 July. A detachment of the squadron's Spitfires moved to Balikpapan on 15 July, and began operations to support Australian troops there. The detachment remained there until the end of the war, flying its last sortie on 10 August 1945; its final aerial victory of the war came on 24 July when a Japanese bomber was shot down in a night-time raid over Balikpapan.

Operations continued after the war, albeit limited to defensive duties only. In October, 452 Squadron's aircraft were returned to Australia and the unit disbanded at Tarakan on 17 November 1945. Australian casualties amongst the squadron's personnel during the war amounted to 49 killed.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2011, 452 Squadron was re-raised as an air traffic control and it now forms part of No. 44 Wing and is headquartered at Darwin. It maintains subordinate flights at Darwin, Tindal, Amberley, Townsville and the Oakey Army Aviation Centre which provide air traffic control for these bases.

When you stop believing in Santa – you get licorice and underwear!



This was the last cash pay at Amberley, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1987.

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Jillian Pollen and Jenny Richardson – in Darwin.