



Image: John Best, QAAM. Adapted. See [here](#) for original.

## The Curious Case of XA514

On 13 November 1956 Gannet XA514 crashed on the airfield adjacent to runway 03. It had been on a test flight when it suffered a failure of the port Propeller Control Unit – a relatively minor defect – yet the aircraft was written off and the two occupants narrowly escaped with their lives. The accident cost the Fleet Air Arm a virtually new Gannet and its captain his flying career. So just what did happen to XA514?

### Aircraft System

In order to understand the circumstances it is necessary to first know some technical aspects of the Fairey Gannet.

The Gannet's two propellers (one for each engine) were designed to turn at a constant speed in flight. To ensure this, the pitch of each prop was adjusted to absorb any power changes applied to it: a coarser pitch for higher power and finer pitch for lower. This was automatically done by each of two Pitch Control Units (PCUs) – one for each propeller.

A characteristic of the Gannet was that if a propeller's pitch was allowed to go to the fully fine 'ground' position (about 6° of pitch) it effectively presented itself to the airflow as a solid disc, creating massive drag. This was demonstrated to pilots during training by lowering the undercarriage and shutting an engine down. The CPU would sense the rapidly diminishing power being delivered from the 'failed' engine and would fine off the prop's pitch to the full extent possible. The propeller would then 'disc', creating aerodynamic drag and a rate of descent of about 2,500 feet per minute, even with full power

on the other engine. It could also result in control problems as the airflow over the tail empennage was disrupted.

So, the Gannet had a thing called the 'Flight Fine Pitch Stop' (FFPS). This was a pin which imposed a 21° minimum 'Flight Pitch' limit on its respective propeller. The pin was automatically inserted when the undercarriage was raised.

In normal operations, then, with the undercarriage up, the FFPS ensured the relevant propeller couldn't 'fine up' to the point where discing occurred if an engine failed or was shut down.

But if the gear was down (or subsequently lowered), the FFPS pin was automatically withdrawn and the affected propeller could fine off, and 'disc'. Of course this was of little concern if you were at altitude as there was time to relight the engine, or, indeed, if you were within inches of the ground in the normal landing configuration. But outside of these parameters (for example, in the circuit) this situation was not at all desirable. Indeed, we know of at least one such case that was the probable cause of disaster.

So, to safeguard against propellers 'discing' in critical parts of the flight envelope the pilot could override the normal system. This was done by means of switches in the cockpit (one for each prop), which prevented their respective FFPS pin from being withdrawn, *even when the undercarriage was down*. In this case the respective propeller could not reduce below 21° of pitch and therefore not 'disc'.

It was vitally important that the pilot engage this safety mechanism if he suspected a faulty (and therefore unpredictable) Pitch Control Unit, or if he was contemplating single engine operations with the undercarriage down.

An example of how mis-management of the above system could cause an accident occurred some years later to another Gannet. It is believed that the pilot had shut one engine down. The prop of the inoperative engine was being held at Flight Fine Pitch (21°) because the undercarriage was up. Unfortunately the pilot forgot to engage the FFPS override switch so that, when he lowered the undercarriage to land, the FFPS pin was automatically withdrawn and the affected prop went to Ground Pitch (6°) and 'disced.' The resultant high rate of descent close to the ground caused the aircraft to crash and the pilot was killed (see photo opposite).

#### **Circumstances of the Accident to XA514**

The aircraft had undergone an ECU change and was to be test flown by the Station maintenance pilot, who we will call 'Lieutenant X'. He asked the Squadron's senior instructor, who was on exchange from the Royal Navy, to accompany him in order to check instruments in the centre cockpit. Although senior to him in rank, the instructor was not the captain of the aircraft. We will call him Lieutenant Commander Y.

Not very long after take-off the aircraft crashed on the grass adjacent to runway 03, and was destroyed. So what happened?

#### **Investigation**

Immediately after the accident a local investigation was conducted in which it was established that both piston seals in the port propeller pitch change piston had failed, with the result that the PCU was only able to control the port propeller's speed under conditions of light load (low airspeed and low shaft horsepower). It was, in effect, a PCU failure – which was of itself not critically dangerous and was not the primary cause of the accident.

The local investigation was unable to establish other factors to the same clarity, however, due to the widely differing stories of the two pilots. Accordingly, a week after the accident NAS



*Gannet WN458 in bushland near Albatross, 15 October 1959. The likely cause was failure to engage the Flight Fine Pitch Stop during single engine operations close to the ground. [S/Lt Leon Mauritz](#) lost his life as a result.*

Nowra advised the Flag Officer In Charge East Australian Area: 'I am now convinced that a Board of Inquiry (BOI) is very necessary to establish beyond reasonable doubt the causes of this accident.'

The Board subsequently released its report on 27 November 1956, two weeks after the accident. The Board's findings were:

- The aircraft required an initial maintenance test flight after [an] ECU change and Lieutenant X was instructed to carry out this test in his capacity as Station Maintenance Test Pilot. Evidence established that satisfactory ground checks were carried out with the exception that on the run-up prior to take off the pilot noticed that both shaft horsepower readings were low. However, he considered it prudent to continue the flight.

*Continued on page 4*



Photo by Les Galbraith

# Should “FlyBy” Continue?

By the Editor, Marcus Peake

In the forthcoming ‘Slipstream’, which has been delayed, WA Division has commented as follows:

*“Our members have expressed their reservations about the need for the online magazine FLYBY which is seen to be in opposition to Slipstream. There has been some discussion here in the West that FLYBY content has expanded while that of Slipstream has shrunk. Jim Bush pointed out to Marcus Peak [sic] that in the article regarding the new Veterans Card, mistakes were made regarding cover for veterans and although the articles are well researched generally, many members were misinformed. The consensus is that more important articles are featured in FLYBY while Slipstream seems to be relegated to a supporting role. There is no doubt that Paul Shiels is doing a great job as Editor, but the fear is that the hard copy version of Slipstream will not survive and those members who are not on the internet will miss out. In the West there are 53 members out of 88 who still take the hard copy of Slipstream and it’s seen as a very important part of the communication between the states, especially for members here in the West. Although the magazines are published two months apart some members would like to see them merged but always retaining a hardcopy because as one member put it; ‘It’s much easier to take a hardcopy of Slipstream into the dunny then it is to take a computer!’”*

It seems timely to raise this topic on a broader canvas as, like all volunteers who work to make the FAAAA what is it, I have a diminishing number of remaining heartbeats and don’t want to waste them on unwanted effort. **So, I’m asking if you could fill out a simple survey on whether you think this Newsletter should continue.**

But before we get to that, it is worth providing a few facts as not only does WA Division’s comment contain some inaccuracies, but it misses key points in the ‘Slipstream/FlyBy debate.

SLIPSTREAM	FLYBY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is published <u>quarterly</u>.</li> <li>• Is available either in ‘Hardcopy’ or ‘Softcopy’.</li> <li>• Generally concentrates on in-depth FAA and other stories of interest to its readers.</li> <li>• Goes to members of the FAAAA only.</li> <li>• Is always 40 pages +</li> <li>• WON’T get bigger if the two publications are merged: its size is limited by postal costs.</li> <li>• Hardcopy Slipstream is <b>not</b> under threat. It will remain available in this format for as long as the FAAAA is viable and we have volunteers willing to make it happen.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is published <u>monthly</u>.</li> <li>• Is available in Softcopy format only.</li> <li>• Generally concentrates on news/items of more immediate nature (‘short fuse’), or which are linked to the website (like the Gannet one above).</li> <li>• Goes to anyone on our database (members or not).</li> <li>• Is seldom more than 10 pages in its settled format.</li> <li>• Doesn’t ‘steal’ from Slipstream, or vice versa (the two Editors work together).</li> </ul>

From my perspective, the two publications do very different things, each in their own way, and are both professionally produced.

But that’s just what I think. I’m happy to throw the question to the court of public opinion: should ‘FlyBy’ continue or not? It will be the work of an instant to scrap it, if that is the view, or if there is general apathy to the question.

**Please click on the button below. You will be taken to a single question YES/NO survey, to say whether you think ‘FlyBy’ should continue or not. Your participation will only take a few seconds and will be completely anonymous. If we get a majority “No”, or a poor response to the survey, publication will cease at once.**

**GO TO SURVEY**



## The Curious Tale of XA514 (continued from page 2)

- Lieutenant Commander Y was carried on the flight in order to check instruments from the centre cockpit, and although senior in rank to Lieutenant X he was clearly not captain of the aircraft.
- Evidence indicates that Lieutenant X did not check to see if the Flight Fine Pitch Stops had engaged after take-off - a routine that must be carried out on every flight and which is specifically called for in the Squadron Orders of 724 Squadron, to which the aircraft belonged.
- The aircraft climbed to a height of about 3,000 feet by which stage the port engine revolutions had crept up. On account of this the pilot then shut down the port engine and then found the propeller would not feather. At this stage he decided to return to base and called the control tower to ask for the circuit to be cleared as he had "slight engine trouble on the port engine".
- Two unsuccessful attempts were then made by the pilot to restart the port engine; however a third attempt, carried out by Lieutenant Commander Y from the centre cockpit, proved successful. The pilot then saw fit to shut down and re-light the *starboard* engine, notwithstanding the known unreliability of his other engine/PCU. Throughout this evolution the revolutions on the port engine tended to rise above the speed recommended with no increase in throttle setting.
- The situation by now was that the pilot had a port engine which was over-speeding with no power increase, would not feather, was apparently difficult to relight, but was within limits at low power settings. Notwithstanding these circumstances the pilot had continued with the flight and had even shut down and relit the starboard engine which, fortunately, was accomplished successfully.
- Although the pilot claims that immediately following the relighting of the starboard engine he lowered and retracted the undercarriage as a routine test at about 5,500 feet, no evidence to support the claim was forthcoming. In fact the evidence of Lieutenant Commander Y suggests the first time the undercarriage was lowered was when crossing the airfield boundary at a height of about 3,000 feet some little time later. His evidence moreover indicates the undercarriage was lowered on this occasion preparatory to entering the circuit to land. Evidence also indicates that on the first occasion of lowering the undercarriage at whatever height it may have been done, the Flight Fine Pitch Stop was still switched to 'Normal'.
- Considerable doubt exists concerning the timing of subsequent events relating one to another due to the conflicting evidence of the two officers onboard. The facts elucidated are that the port engine again over-spiced and showed a reduction in Jet Pipe Temperature and was shut down. The undercarriage was retracted, the aircraft commenced to lose height and airspeed and an attempt was made to carry out a left hand turn onto runway 03 with a view to making a landing. Evidence also indicates that somewhere during this latter stage and most probably at

the intersection of runways 26 and 03 the pilot considered he had lost control of the aircraft.

- It was also established that Lieutenant Commander Y increased power on the starboard throttle and placed his hands and feet on the controls. From this time until the aircraft crashed, it is evident that both officers were struggling simultaneously on the controls. The evidence shows that the undercarriage was selected down about the time of the aircraft crossing the intersection, and the pilot finding extreme difficulty in control. The officers' combined efforts on the controls somehow brought the aircraft to a belly landing after the undercarriage was again selected up. As a result, although the aircraft was seriously damaged, both pilots escaped with no more than minor injuries and shock.

### Differing Accounts of Pilots

The evidence of the two pilots differed widely on key matters in both the development of the problem and the subsequent descent to the crash site, so it was little wonder that the two investigations had difficulty in determining the sequence of events.

It was the position of the landing gear that caused the most dissention, however, and which was the most critical factor as, without any manual override, lowering the gear would have caused the Fine Flight Pitch Stop to withdraw. This in turn would have caused 'discing' on the port engine propeller, leading to an uncontrollable rate of descent.

In his evidence Lieutenant X was adamant that the undercarriage remained up throughout the approach. He later wrote:

*"...then he [the copilot] shouted 'Lower the undercarriage!' to which I replied, 'Jesus, no!' as we were still descending and unsure of aligning with the runway in a safe position for landing."*

In contrast, Lieutenant Commander Y told the Board that the other pilot shut down the port engine to the windmilling position and then lowered the undercarriage. This supported a contradictory account written by Lieutenant X some years later, in which he stated:

*"I found that I needed to leave flaps and undercarriage lowered in order to induce drag while maintaining engine control for descent..."*

This also contradicted his earlier evidence to the Board and is itself curious, as it is difficult to imagine why it would be necessary to induce drag in a single engine situation with one propeller discing.

### The Crash

By then, however, the situation had deteriorated to the point that both pilots were flying the aircraft and doing things without the knowledge of the other. Lieutenant Commander Y told the Board that he raised the undercarriage during the approach to reduce drag, but noted it was lowered again although he could not say by whom. He then reportedly raised it again just prior to touchdown 'in order to ensure the [FFPS] locks were out.'

[sic]. According to his BOI transcript, Lieutenant X believed the undercarriage to be up at all times.

With the two pilots both struggling on the controls, the aircraft was somehow positioned over the grass adjacent to runway 03 and a forced landing conducted. The Board of Inquiry made no significant comment on the degree of control difficulty, but Lieutenant X subsequently wrote:

*"...we were still descending and unsure of aligning with the runway in a safe position for landing. Our speed was 105 knots when the aircraft became uncontrollably wing heavy as the torque took control. It rolled beyond 90 degrees and appeared to be rolling on its back. My passenger was screaming 'Pick it up! Pick it up!', which was heard over the radio by the tower and other aircraft."*

In contrast, Lieutenant Commander Y told the Board he felt he was in 'moral control' of the machine, and that it was he who flew it all the way to the ground and who made the landing, with no notable control problems, and with utter silence from the front cockpit.

About the only thing the pilots could agree on was that the undercarriage was indeed up by the time the aircraft struck the ground. It slid for some distance before stopping, its back broken. The two pilots were able to climb out unaided, suffering only from shock and minor injuries.

## Conclusions

The Board remarked that Lieutenant X's conversion to Gannet aircraft was inadequate. The report went on to say *"...he had only completed one flight with an experienced instructor in the centre cockpit and had not at any stage carried out advanced engine handling sequences recommended by the Chief Test Pilot of the Fairey Aviation Company and subsequently embodied in the Gannet conversion syllabus approved by the Naval Board."*

Despite this almost complete lack of training, Lieutenant X was expected to fly maintenance flights on what was then the most complex aircraft on the RAN's inventory. He was by any measure ill-equipped to recognise the symptoms presented to him on that day, and, more to the point, to manage the rapidly deteriorating circumstances that followed. Lieutenant Commander Y was also relatively inexperienced, with just 25 hours in the Gannet. Astonishingly, crew experience and (lack of) training was not considered to be a contributory cause of the accident.

As it was the BOI concluded, inter alia, that the accident had been caused by the failure of the two seals in the port propeller pitch change piston, and *"...the pilot's complete failure to appreciate the significance of the symptoms in relation to*

*overspeeding of the port engine, and consequent failure to engage the Flight Fine Pitch Stops immediately."*

To prevent recurrence, the Board made certain recommendations about the history of defective propeller seals, and the serviceability of any propellers on charge with similar life history. They also recommended: *"That...no pilot be permitted to commence flying solo, or to continue so doing, in Gannet aircraft without having satisfactorily completed the revised Gannet conversion syllabus approved...on 25 September 1956."* In other words, they recognised the dangers of ill-trained pilots flying the Gannet, but did not attribute Lieutenant X's lack of training as a causal factor.

The Board of Inquiry contained two further paragraphs that were to seal the fate of Lieutenant X. The first was by the Commanding Officer of 724 Squadron, who wrote:

*"This is the second accident within a month in which Lieutenant X has experienced material failure in one of my squadron's aircraft and has not fully appreciated the fact. As a pilot he has always been, since I first knew him, nervous and under-confident. I have never been very happy with him flying my aircraft, but as he is the Maintenance Test Pilot appointed to N.A.S. NOWRA, I felt he should be employed as such. However, in view of recent events I consider that the pilots in my Squadron are far more competent in the handling and knowledge of their aircraft than is Lieutenant X and therefore intend to do all future test flying of squadron aircraft within the Squadron."*

Commander Air stated:

*"...the pilot should have selected the Flight Fine Pitch Stop switch of the faulty engine to 'Engaged', before any attempt was made to lower the undercarriage and that failure to do so was the primary cause of the accident."*

These comments, together with the Board's recommendation that Lieutenant X should be reverted to non-flying duties, was sufficient to end his flying career. He was subsequently posted for sea-going duties aboard one of the RAN's ships.

Lieutenant X subsequently wrote a book in which he claimed the written transcript of the Board of Inquiry had been altered by hand so that his responses were changed from positive to negative and vice-versa in critical parts. He also asserted that certain key expert witnesses had not been called to give evidence, which would have supported his testimony.

## Comment

More than fifty years after the accident it is even more difficult to be clear about who did what than it was then. The transcript of the Board of Inquiry's investigation reveals that, by modern day standards, it was not particularly thorough. The key question: 'what was the position of the FFPS switch' appears never to have been asked – or, if it was, didn't appear in the transcript.

At the end of the day, Lieutenant X was found wholly responsible and lost his wings. When all is said and done, that may have been justifiable – he was, after all, the Captain of a very expensive aircraft that was destroyed, despite the initial defect being relatively minor.

## MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR PAUL KIMLIN

In our last edition we advised that the Australian War Memorial was holding a 'Last Post' ceremony for **LEUT Paul Kimlin** on 2 April.

Like every other public venue, the AWM has had to close so the above service has been postponed until further notice.

## Remembering A Friend

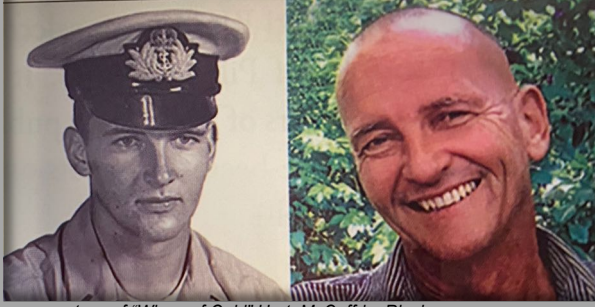


Image courtesy of "Wings of Gold" Hart, McCaffrie, Rieck

One of the things the FAAAA tries to do is to put an obituary on our website when an ex-FAA member passes on. It's our way of remembering them, and, we hope, to give readers a moment to reflect on old friends or associates.

No doubt we miss a lot of names, but occasionally an omission comes to light. One did this week, when the daughter of the late **CMDR Peter Clark** DFC, RAN wrote to me regarding a video on the demise of our Skyhawks. During the conversation I realised that we hadn't honoured Peter with an obituary, even though he died some 14 years ago. So, now there is one on the website, which you can read [here](#).

Many people knew and admired Peter, so if you are inclined you can log into our website and leave a message on that obituary page, or perhaps a few words about something he did or said that serve to remind us of him, and who he was. ✈

## The Curious Tale of XV514 (continued)

But every accident results from a sequence of circumstances, like links in a chain. Why was a pilot with so few Gannet hours performing the duties of station Maintenance Test Pilot, particularly as a Squadron CO allegedly had doubts about his ability? How was he given a Gannet endorsement in the first place with such inadequate training? Who briefed and authorised the flight, and what was the nature of that brief? And what briefing did Lieutenant X give to his passenger, who was senior to him in rank but subservient in his role in the aircraft?

We will probably never know exactly what went on in the cockpit of XV514 on that day but one thing is certain – much of what occurred had its genesis before either pilot stepped into the aircraft.

From our reading of the evidence it seems clear that, notwithstanding that a Pitch Control Unit was malfunctioning, the loss of the aircraft was indeed caused by failure to engage the Flight Fine Pitch Stops before the undercarriage was lowered. In a single engine situation this would have resulted in the non-effective propeller 'discing', which would in turn have resulted in a high and irreversible rate of descent and perhaps control problems.

Inexperience and an ignorance of aircraft systems is one thing, however. What makes this accident curious, if that is the right word, is the complete lack of cooperation between the pilots, and their inability to not only work together but even to accurately recount who was doing what in the aircraft. Neither

was particularly experienced in the Gannet, yet the communication between them, as reported in their evidence to the BOI, was at best minimal. Astonishingly, the situation deteriorated to the point where both pilots were flying the machine without knowing who was actually in control or what the other was doing. Their almost complete lack of situational awareness and/or lapses in memory of who did what and when was also remarkable.

Today, aircrew in multi-crew aircraft are trained to work cooperatively together: is called Cockpit Resource Management, or CRM. The circumstances of XA514's crash could be used as a notable example of what can go wrong when CRM breaks down.

You can see the history of all of the RAN's Gannets, and the heritage story of this remarkable type, on our website [here](#).

*Editor's Note: The author was a qualified Aircraft Accident Investigator in the RAN. The contents of this article and the conclusions he reached are, however, not necessarily those of the FAA Association of Australia. ✈*

## Operation Brancard

Dear Editor,

With reference to your article on Operation Brancard in last month's 'FlyBy', it was not the first forward deployment of aircraft by the RAN FAA.

In September 1952 four Sea Furies and four Fireflies were deployed to Manus via Townsville, Pt Moresby and then to Momote on Manus. We then embarked in HMAS *Vengeance*, as ostensibly replacement aircraft, if the need had arisen on operations.

The longest leg was 5 hours and 45 minutes to Townsville, a long time in a MK VI Firefly, but the leg in loose formation over the Owen Stanley's of 2 hours 35 minutes with no aids, kept us on our toes. We used small movements of pitch rather than throttle to stay in touch with the Master Observer leading us so as to not call on the accelerator pump. (Continued next page)





*This photo popped up on a private Facebook page during the month: an evocative image that reminds us of the recent bushfires around Nowra, and the miraculous survival of Tracker 842 (153597), which not only escaped the Nowra hangar fire in '76, but also two bush fires in its resting place not far from the Air Station. Regrettably, it has not withstood the ravages of time or weather. Photo Tessa Peacock.*

The ship then deployed to the west coast for us to carry out patrols over the cleared area for the nuclear test on the Monto Bello islands. I have a photo of us all at Momote should you want it.

Norman Lee. ✈

### Wall of Service Update

Order No 44 closed early and the plaques have been manufactured, ready to fasten to the Wall soon. Names are:

NAAH W.K. Jones	CPO G. Williams
LCDR A.E. Johnson (O)(P)	ABAVN R. Matheson
LCDR G.S. Wall	CPO A.A. Scott

We would normally need a minimum of 12 names before we can submit the order to the Foundry, but on this occasion a special dispensation was made for a good reason: hence the smaller order.

Order No 45 is now open with just one name on it at the moment: **Lorne Thurgar**. You can put your application to join this batch now, which will avoid an expected price hike later this year. Information on how to apply and the cost, etc, can be found [here](#). ✈

### Geoff Brooks – Roll of Honour

For a few years it has been a source of concern to the webmaster that he was unable to raise a 'Roll of Honour' page

for LEUT **Geoff Brooks**, who was killed in a winning accident back in 1995.

This has now been fixed, with the help of our readers who put us in contact with Geoff's widow, **Kate Brooks**. She graciously gave us permission to access Geoff's service records, and also provided some very moving words about him. You can see the RoH page [here](#).



1964 - 1995

The work was greatly assisted by **Kim Dunstan**, who is unstinting in the time he gives to the Association, and **Neil Gunn**, who was a classmate of Geoff's, and provided much background detail. We extend our particular thanks to them both.

It is fitting that we never forget those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, and the Association will continue to work on the few names on the Roll whose pages are still incomplete, or are yet to be produced.

You can see the complete Roll of Honour [here](#), and spend a little time reflecting on the names upon it, in memory of who they were. ✈

# The Genesis of a Cartoon



By the Editor. A couple of years ago I was contacted by a very talented artist called **Jim Rae**, who kindly offered to let me display some of his amazing paintings on our website. You can see them [here](#) (Jim also did our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary poster of all the aircraft types operated by our FAA, which readers might remember).

Fast forward to March 2020, when I received an email from Mr **Mike Cole-Hamilton**, an ex-RN Gannet pilot, who offered to tell me the story behind a couple of Jim's paintings should I be interested. Mindful of the old adage that every picture really does tell a story I replied in the affirmative and received two marvellous accounts, with the artwork and narrative to match.

The first is about the cartoon above. With the caption "More Revs, Chief, More Revs", it shows a Gannet doing a VERTREP

with the Brit Destroyer *HMS Cavalier*. An unlikely scenario, I hear you say? Perhaps...but maths suggests the concept is not totally impossible.

The story goes that there was a discussion aboard *Cavalier* on the relatively low stall speed of a Gannet. The question got asked: given incredibly favourable conditions, would it be possible to do a VERTREP with a Gannet? Mike, as the SME, got asked for his expert opinion.

Mike racked his memory (given that he'd last flown Gannets some 50 years earlier). He thought that the Gannet stalled with full flaps at 88 knots, and the landing speed was 94. Subtract any headwind to give a 'relative to deck' speed: for example, landing on a carrier doing 25 knots into a 25 knot headwind gave a relative landing speed of only 44 knots – hence the appearance of a very slow approach.

So, in theory, if you had a ship/headwind combination of 88 knots or more, a Gannet could appear to 'hover' in a relative sense.

Mike deduced that a fast WW2 Destroyer like *Cavalier* could travel through the water at 37 knots in favourable conditions, so it would have to be a hell of a headwind – i.e. 'storm force' under the Beaufort scale. You'd be flying at stall speed close to the water, possibly in funnel and superstructure turbulence,

## † REST IN PEACE †

Since the last edition of 'FlyBy' we have become aware of the loss of **Martin Edwards** and **Warwick Robinson**.

You can read a little more of these sad events on our Obituary pages [here](#), and, if you are a member of the Association, you can leave a comment there if you wish. ✈



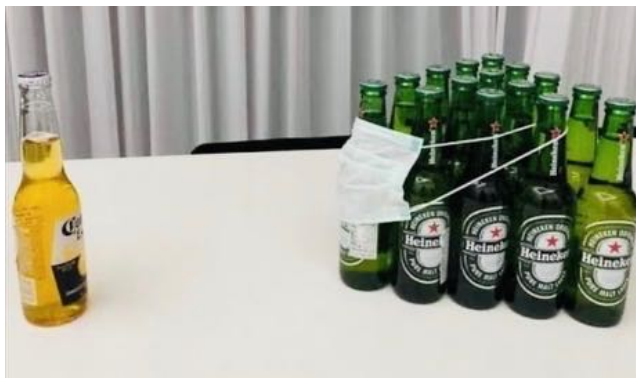
and the ship's movement would be violent. So...yes, in theory it was possible to 'hover' a Gannet over a ship in these circumstances – but no thanks!!

Jim Rae then got hauled into the exercise to illustrate the concept and the above cartoon (page 8) was the result. We don't know who has the original but we are happy to have a copy on our website.

The other story behind a picture is the one below. We'll tell you about that next month. ✈



## CORONA CANCELLATIONS



Social Distancing is beginning to bite into organised events, so we ask our members to be vigilant in checking before you head off to a meeting or event.

For example, a couple of our AGMs were cancelled in March (SA and NSW Division), and ANZAC Day services and marches are, as far as we are aware, cancelled in every State. 'Wings Over Illawarra', one of the year's BIG aviation events, was to have occurred in May but it has now been postponed to Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November, subject to COVID-19 behaving itself which seems unlikely in the immediate term. More Wings of Illawarra information [here](#).

Similarly, Canberra Airport Open Day, which was supposed to be on 05 April, has been postponed for a year.

The situation is fluid, to say the least, so if you are thinking of heading off to a gathering, meeting or an event of some kind please double check first. This newsletter isn't frequent enough to use as a definitive source, so please check!

While on the subject of social distancing – for some people, it can rapidly turn into social isolation. There are many in our

community who are vulnerable, so spare a thought for your mates, friends, neighbours or even strangers. The 'RUOK' protocol is as important now as it ever was, so please – if you think someone needs a hand up, metaphorically speaking, then step up to help, or tell someone who can.

See the excellent RUOK website [here](#), or read the basic notes below. ✈

# RUOK?™

## Starting a conversation



### 1. Ask R U OK?

- Pick the right time and place to start the conversation.
- Mention specific things that have made you concerned for them, like "You seem less chatty than usual. How are you going?"



### 2. Listen

- Take what they say seriously and don't interrupt or rush the conversation.
- Encourage them to explain: "How are you feeling about that?" or "How long have you felt that way?"
- Show that you're listening by repeating back what you've heard (in your own words) and ask if you've understood them properly.



### 3. Encourage action

- Help them think of next steps they could take to help them manage their situation.
- If they've been down for more than two weeks, encourage them to see a health professional.
- Be positive about the role of professionals in getting through tough times.



### 4. Check in

- Schedule a reminder to call them in a couple of weeks. If they're really struggling, follow up with them sooner.
- Stay in touch and be there for them. Genuine care and concern can make a real difference.

## How to put idle hours to use...

Some time ago the Webmaster laboriously scanned hard copies of every single Slipstream Magazine, and put them on the website. It took ages, but for the first time anyone could read any edition, simply by accessing it on the website. You can see the library [here](#).

This is of vital interest to historians, as the magazines go back many years. But not just historians! There's heaps of stuff in there of general interest, too, such as "Spin Us a Dit" stories about FAA characters and the things they got up to, or Letters to the Editor about Squadrons, mess-deck life, flying, near-misses and characters in the FAA!

The trouble is, nobody knows what is in which edition, which means if you are looking for particular stuff...like stories on HMS *Nabington*, for example, you have to troll through countless back-copies.

So, we need an index! And, more to the point, we need volunteers to help create one.

The current COVID-19 quarantine/lock-down means folk may well be at home with time on their hands, so why not hold up one of them and volunteer? You'll be amazed at the variety and scope of the material in past copies, and this will be an absorbing few hours each week.

You can commit to do as few magazines as you like, or as many. The only criteria is that you do it well.

So, why not help out? Contact the webmaster [here](#) if you are interested in hearing more. ✈

## HARS to Release New Tracker DVD



HARS advises that it has now completed the necessary recording for a DVD entitled "**Launch Tracker 844**", and is in final phases of pre-production (i.e. approving the cover design of the DVD and proofing the "final cut" version). It will then approve production, and the DVD will be sold through the HARS shop and networks e.g. as part of any Tracker 844 appearance - with proceedings helping to keep the Tracker flying.

The DVD will cost \$25 plus any postage; it runs for over 1 hr 15 mins in total, and in the last 30 minutes or so the coverage concentrates on the first flight late last year and the series of flying runs, taxi-ing and wing folds 844 performed at the Reunion in November 2019. Great A-V!

You can order a copy of the DVD now, and your order will be included in the initial numbers HARS commissions - SO IF YOU WANT A DVD PLEASE HELP BY PRE- ORDERING YOUR COPY BY EMAILING HARS NHF [here](#). ✈

## COMFAA UPDATE DEFERRED

We were hoping to bring you a COMFAA general update on what's been happening in the FAA over the last few months – in fact, we had one in our hot little hands!

Unfortunately Navy (Defence?) has apparently changed the rules for Press Releases – we hear they now have to be cleared at two-star level (as if they didn't have enough to do!), and ours hadn't been. Accordingly, COMFAA had to 'pull' the update, but we are hopeful of getting another one before too long. ✈



More details are available on the AIRCREW reunion to be held over the weekend of Friday 23-Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2020, at Albion Park, NSW.

This coincides with the Fleet Air Arm Association's AGM which is to be held at the FAA Museum on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October. All are welcome to attend that, too.

The aircrew reunion details can be found on our website [here](#). It gives all current details and includes a registration form to express your interest in attending one or more of the scheduled events. Please fill this in as the organisers really do need to get an idea of numbers. ✈

## HARD COPY SLIPSTREAM DELAYED

**The March edition of Slipstream, which would normally be in your letter-boxes now, has been delayed as the printer's press broke down. There is now also a problem with packing it (once printed) as we cannot have more than two people together in the room. We are exploring all options and will keep members who receive hard-copy informed.**

## Endpiece: A Message From Our National President



G'Day Everyone,

I usually end my thoughts to the FAAAA membership in 'Slipstream' with a gentle suggestion to '...stay safe, healthy and well'. In these difficult times due to the Covid-19 pandemic I might start with this thought in these words in 'FlyBy'.

And it is not just a suggestion: the 23,000 people across the planet

dead (so far) as a result of Covid 19 indicate that it is way more important than a suggestion!

As I draft this, Australia has just over 3,000 cases of the disease, with over half of these in NSW, and sadly people 13 have now died across Australia. There are 500,000 cases in 182 countries around the world with over 23,000 deaths - sobering numbers.

Can I urge everyone to follow Government's and health professionals' advice in relation to physical distancing, hand washing and care when coughing and sneezing. Personally, I am taking great notice of the advice being provided to the British and New Zealanders as it seems to me that we need to go harder in Australia to throttle this disease before it throttles us.

Can I also urge everyone to reach out to family, friends and old mates wherever you can. It is an extraordinarily difficult time and a mate you have not spoken to in months may appreciate a quick call, a suggestion, or even a hand getting some medication or groceries.

Everyone approaches these times in different ways, not least us Veterans. Everyone's life has been disrupted in some way and it will cause issues in different ways. Isolation is not something that human beings are meant to endure, and we are now being asked to do just that at present! Additionally, most Veterans have medical issues of various sorts that may make a simple walk down the street a very dangerous evolution at the moment. So, please reach out to anyone and everyone that you can. If you need assistance, put your hand up. There will be someone around who will be able to assist you.

I know not everyone is a fan of social media, or even on social media, but it is a valuable tool, and the good old fashioned telephone is also a good safe way of getting in contact in these challenging times.

Please take every type of care and look after one another.

**Mark Campbell**  
RADM, RAN (Rtd)  
National President.