



**Altona Laverton
Historical Society Inc.**
PO Box 236 Altona 3018

NEWSLETTER

The First Air Flights at Altona led to Secret Activities during World War Two



We have covered in previous Newsletters the First Air

Flight from Altona Estate in November 1910 by Gaston Cugnet, from the Aero Club de France, he was the first pupil of the Bleriot School of Flying, and flew a *Bleriot X1 Monoplane* for the flight. The plane is pictured right at a second flight carried out at Melbourne Cricket Ground

The Altona Estate was placed at his disposal by Mr. W. H. Croker, with refreshments later provided at The Homestead.

This flight was followed in 1911 by other flights piloted by J. J. Hammond, of a *Bristol* aircraft, taking off from Altona which included a flight with the first fee paying commercial passenger, Mr. M. H. Baillieu.



First Charter, and first Australian Passenger Flight. Mr. M. H. Baillieu seated with Mr. J. J. Hammond about to take off on 2/3/1911. — Altona Museum.

*These demonstration flights had aroused the interest of Military personnel around the World, and in Australia this subsequently led to the establishment at **Point Cook**, of the Central Flying School in 1912, later known as Australian Flying Corps (AFC) during WW1 and which was renamed the **Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)**, on March 31, 1921 after World War 1.*

RAAF Base Point Cook was the Air Forces only base from 1912 to 1925, when RAAF Base Richmond (NSW) and RAAF Base Laverton were built.

Point Cook was the Birthplace of military aviation in Australia, and is currently the oldest continuously operating airbase in the world. The Australian Government acquired Point Cook to establish the first military flying school (The Central Flying School), the first military flight took place on March 1, 1914.

World War Two-Secret Operations



Author Jack Bleakley in his 1991 book *"the EAVESDROPPERS"* made readers aware of a long held secret that the **RAAF** had contributed to **Signals Intelligence** in the war against the Japanese during the period commencing 1941-42.

He indicated that early activities in this area began in 1921 when a young Royal Australian Naval Officer ,**Lieutenant T. E. Nave** was attached to the British Embassy in Tokyo.Nave quickly self learned the Japanese version of "Morse " and the Japanese language by listening to records.

After gaining experience Lt. Nave later a Commander returned to Australia and was appointed to command a small **RAN** section at Victoria Barracks the **Special Intelligence Bureau** as a Cryptographic Organisation.

The first **RAAF** group then followed in July 1941 and began to learn the Japanese Morse Code, they were fast learners and within eight weeks had begun to attack and decipher Japanese messages.

Jack Bleakley became a member of this special group of wireless interceptors in Melbourne and their operations later extended to Northern Australia when they became part of General McArthur's United States Forces-"**Central Bureau**" based in Brisbane.



Later in 1942 the first Women's Auxiliary Air Force (**WAAFS**) were trained at Melbourne Showgrounds ,and then secretly transported to the **RAAF Base at Point Cook** where they intercepted Japanese Army and Navy wireless messages they sent the results to the Melbourne Headquarters of the **Central Bureau** - Pictured is No. 1 Wireless Group

They lived separately from others on the Base and operated from an old iron hut, out of bounds to all ranks and patrolled by RAAF Guards.It was known as the hush-hush area, and even the Commanding Officer was not aware of everything going on in the building.

The assistance of Australians in helping the US Forces Code Breakers is little acknowledged but the information gained was considered to have helped reduce the war in the Pacific by two years.

The Melbourne Headquarters of the **Central Bureau** was in the at the time newly constructed building at 17 Queens Road Albert Park (Now Melbourne) ,commandeered by the Defence Department before occupancy by owners, the building named "**Monterey**" still exists as private residential Units.



"Monterey" Apartments

1942 - A Japanese Plane flew over Melbourne

Jap Plane Over Melbourne In 1942

Although an announcement was not officially made at the time because of wartime secrecy, a Japanese plane circled over the Melbourne area in 1942.

The Japanese had developed submarines (a typical one is pictured) which were capable of carrying a plane externally which could be used for surveillance purposes and this was done above Melbourne as well as Sydney and Hobart in 1942, and later Suva and Auckland.



Melbourne at the time was in a state of war preparedness and this included aircraft searchlight and gun batteries around the area, for example the sports ground adjacent to Australia Glass Manufacturers factory in Spotswood was so equipped.

THE ARGUS 20 AUGUST 1945 REPORTED:

“It is now revealed that the Japanese made reconnaissance flights over several Australian cities and Wellington and Auckland early in 1942, says our New Zealand correspondent.

The information has been obtained from captured enemy documents describing the movements of large Japanese submarines, some of which carried small seaplanes and others the midget submarines which raided Sydney Harbour.

The first flight over New Zealand was made from a submarine carrying a tiny seaplane it flew over Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart in 1942, and then came to New Zealand waters.

Few further details were available from sources in Melbourne last night, but it was stated that a Japanese reconnaissance plane was sighted over **Laverton** early in 1942. It came from a submarine moving in Australian waters, and although the flight was made in daylight bad weather conditions made it impossible to attempt interception.”

THE NEWCASTLE SUN 21 AUGUST REPORTED:

(Melbourne) “ Further information about a Jap plane which flew over Melbourne in 1942 was revealed today by R. A. A. F. headquarters. It was stated that an unidentified plane was sighted over **Laverton** (13 miles from Melbourne) at 5.45 a.m. on February 25.

Laverton reported that the plane was at an altitude of between 800 and 1000 feet and flew in the direction of Melbourne. It was described as a dark coloured twin-float monoplane with covered cockpit.”

In 2016 - There was an Update on the Japanese Plane over Melbourne in 1942

THE HERALD SUN MELBOURNE 26 FEBRUARY 2016

The Herald Sun reported that it was 75 years to the day that, on 26 February 1942, a Japanese plane flew low over the city in a pre dawn reconnaissance mission.



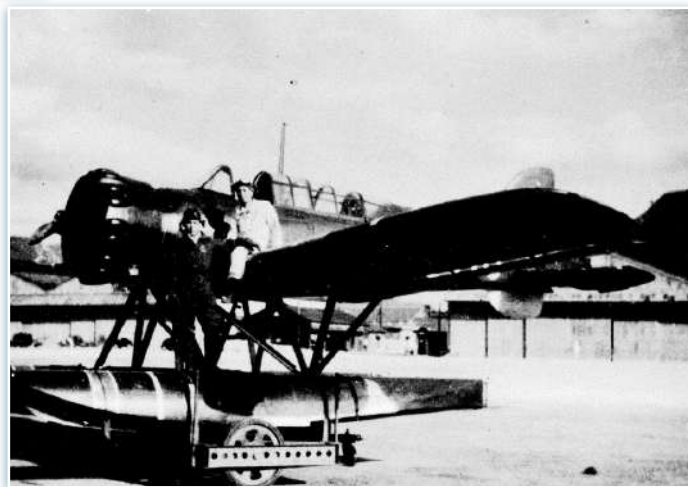
The floatplane piloted by Nobuo Fujita (pictured) took off from a submarine near King Island, and flew over several suburbs and the CBD.

There were comments from former South Melbourne Mayor and State MP Reg Macey stating “The only significant recorded information on it is in the notes of the Japanese pilot” and “Darwin had been bombed only one week before”.

The plane was an Imperial Japanese reconnaissance plane Yokosuka E14Y known by the Allied Forces designation ‘Glen’. Piloted by Warrant Officer Nobuo Fujita it was launched from the Japanese submarine L 25.



Left is a photo of two Glen planes in flight and below Warrant Officer Fujita beside his plane



Local Industry at War

Some of the Hobsons Bay Industrial organisations that became involved in the War Effort

Industry	Location	Product
Australian Glass Manufacturers	Spotswood	Shell Machining, Fuses
Ammonia Company	Spotswood	Ammonia Liquid
W.Goetz and Sons	Spotswood	Fuses
McKenzie & Holland	Newport	Fuses, Aircraft Practice Bombs
Victorian Railways Workshop	Newport	Shells

Other major work was being carried on around the area including Munitions work at Footscray and Maribyrnong

Lest we Forget



ALHS Image



President's Message

Message to All Members

At this time, we trust that all our members and their families are all well and remain that way. These are indeed difficult times and we must be diligent to ensure that we do all we can to protect the wellbeing of our members and our community.

With this in mind, we have closed the Homestead, including our Devonshire Teas, to the public until further notice and need to limit the number of members working in the Homestead to one only at any time. Put the lights on when you are there to let others know NOT to go in. Please pass this message on to our other regular visitors.

When you go into the Homestead, wipe down all surfaces you are likely to come in contact with (Graeme will leave the spray in the Research Room). This is in light of recent announcements from federal and state governments. We need to stay home and away from everyone else.

While I don't think that's all bad (I'm looking forward to getting some projects finished, start some new ones and maybe learn something new), I am very mindful of those who may find this time distressing so please don't hesitate to ask for assistance if you need it. If I can possibly help, I will. Even if all you need is a chat! Feel free to call me.

I am an eternal optimist - and opportunistic! I can think of so many things we could get done while we have time on our side - ask Graeme, he has a list!!

But it is during these times where we cannot gather and meet, we need to think of other ways to keep in contact and also spread our historical wisdom and knowledge to the community.

This is where we see our Facebook and Web page come to the forefront. We have a vast audience online where we can provide new information on past events and earlier settlers to inform and entertain and this is where we need your assistance. If you have background information and images on aspects of early Laverton or Altona then please share these so we can add this to our expanding website and keep stories being posted on our Facebook page. Please send anything you can share to info@alhs.com.au and we will add this our webpage.

If you are not connected to our Facebook page we encourage that you do so in order to keep up to date with our latest stories and news.

These are extraordinary times and we need to think as laterally as possible to keep our society operating as normally and remain as positive as is possible. Let's not lose contact we each other and our community.

Take care of yourselves and I'll see you all when the dust has settled - we will plan for a celebration!

Kim Reilly (President)

What can be completed during this time?

There are lots of things that we can be doing during this time that we can post and share with the community about the history of Altona and Laverton. If any of you have information and images on any of the following topics, then please put these together and email us at info.alhs.com.au and we will place these on our website and post a story on the front page and Facebook page.

Some Suggestions:

- Early settlers/families of Laverton;
- Old Laverton School;
- Early Local Councillors;
- Story behind Street names;
- Railways and Railway Station past and present;
- Story behind Parks and Reserves;
- Local Associations;
- Historical key events and dates.

We are also working on the design and printing of a new brochure for our society which is well on the way so when we have a final copy, we will share this with everyone.

If you have any other ideas for research or tasks that can be undertaken away from the Homestead please share these with members by sending an email to info@alhs.com.au and we will share these to others.

Let's not lose contact with each other, stay in touch by phone or email.